

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Cuban Revolution must be understood by those seeking to emulate its course'

Mary-Alice Waters at Havana book launching  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 68/NO. 9 MARCH 8, 2004

## Brutal, rightist forces take over half of Haiti

Aristide government agrees to imperialist intervention  
Washington, Paris, Ottawa give tacit support to rebels

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Brutal, rightist forces pushing to topple the government of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide seized control of Cap-Haitien, the country's second-largest city, February 22, and now control more than half of the country. Hundreds cheered as the



Louis Jodel Chamblain (center, armed), a former paramilitary thug during the Raul Cedras military regime a decade ago, greets hundreds at Maissade, Haiti, February 17 as he parades in the streets after forces enjoying the tacit approval of Washington took over town.

### No U.S. troops to Haiti!

—see editorial, page 10

rebels burned police stations and routed government supporters. The armed groups, led in many cases by former army officers that served the military regime deposed a decade ago, and figures from the earlier U.S.-backed Duvalier dictatorship that was toppled through a popular uprising, now state that their next objective is Port-au-Prince, the country's capital. Although there is

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## Talks begin, as grocery bosses press concessions

BY JOEL BRITTON

LOS ANGELES—After two months without negotiations, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) reports that "intense" talks are taking place between

the union and the grocery bosses about the strike in central and southern California involving nearly 60,000 workers.

Expanded picket lines and strike support rallies are being held at many of the

850 stores where workers went on strike or were locked out four months ago. At some stores picketers have briefly blocked entrances recently. In each of these cases strikers have been quickly arrested by the cops and taken to a police station, cited for trespassing, and released. Large numbers of customers continue to decline to shop at the affected stores. The UFCW has garnered considerable support from other unions in this region and nationally.

At the same time, the grocery bosses are sticking to their demand that workers accept a contract proposal containing deep union-weakening concessions.

"Grocery Stocks Rise on Hopes for End to Strike" boasted a headline in the February 20 *Los Angeles Times*. "Shares of Safeway,"

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## N.Y. cop who killed Black youth let go by grand jury

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—A police officer who gunned down an unarmed Black youth was cleared of all criminal wrongdoing by a Brooklyn grand jury February 17. While prowling a housing complex with pistol drawn, the cop shot 19-year-old Timothy Stansbury, Jr., in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section.

Siding with the cop's attorney, who called the shooting a "tragic accident," the jury deliberated for 35 minutes before making its decision.

The cop, Richard Neri, claimed he did not remember firing his weapon. He and his partner, both members of the city housing police unit, had entered the building in the middle of the night on what are routine "patrols." They were on a rooftop walkway that connects the building to an adjacent one. Stansbury, who was attending a friend's

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## Coal strikers in Utah speak to miners' locals in the West

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—"Dear brothers and sisters we thank you for inviting us to speak before you and tell you about our strike," said Jesús Salazar, a leader of the strike to win union recognition for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the Co-Op mine here. Salazar was addressing the February 18 morning meeting of International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 953 in Kirtland, New Mexico. The local organizes more than 400 coal miners, overwhelmingly Navajos, who five days earlier had ended a successful 12-day walkout against BHP Billiton, winning a substantial increase in wages and medical coverage and strengthening their union.

A delegation of five Co-Op miners, who are overwhelmingly from Mexico, made the six-hour trip south to Kirtland to address two meetings of the local there. On February 20 a second delegation of four miners and a spouse drove four hours north to Kemmerer, Wyoming, to speak before UMWA Local 1307. The outcome of these meetings showed that after five months on

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## Book by Cuban leader Armando Hart is launched at three Havana meetings

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—"The ideas contained in these pages come out of Cuba's revolutionary struggle," said Armando Hart at a February 15 meeting here. "Today we want to help spread the ideas of the Cuban Revolution, so that students and young people can take these ideas and develop them under today's conditions."

Hart was addressing an audience of 150 people gathered for the launching of *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58, A Participant's Account*, recently released in both English and

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### Grand Opening!

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# Dutch gov’t approves mass deportation bill

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of immigrant workers face possible deportation from the Netherlands after the Dutch parliament approved a bill February 17 calling for the forcible removal of residents who are “failed” asylum-seekers.

Under the legislation, sponsored by the Christian-Democratic government of Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende and approved by a large parliamentary majority, the government has the authority over the next three years to expel 26,000 immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands before April 2001—even if they are longtime residents and have children born in the country, and are awaiting their residency papers. The largest numbers of potential deportees come from Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Defenders of immigrant rights organized early February protests against the bill at the Dutch parliament, denouncing the threat of mass expulsions. Some churches and individual families have offered sanctuary to those facing deportation.

Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk defended the plan, saying it is “humane since it would not break up families, would

provide airline tickets and money to returnees,” according to the *New York Times*.

While seeking to justify the jailing and deportations of thousands of immigrant workers, the Dutch rulers have blamed immigration for the country’s economic stagnation, rising unemployment, and The Hague’s “overburdened” budgets. Right-wing politicians have also alarmingly invoked the “threat” of Islamic clerics coming to the country to attend to the large immigrant Muslim population and undermining “Dutch values,” like measures prohibiting discrimination against women and gays.

Immigration into the Netherlands has substantially increased the last 25 years, rapidly changing the composition of the working class. The Rotterdam Center for Research and Statistics estimates that 70 percent of the population in that city will be made up of immigrants by 2017.

To tackle “the accumulation of social and economic problems,” the Rotterdam authorities announced they no longer intend to house any more asylum-seekers locally, as requested by the national government, not even if these immigrants



February 9 rally outside Dutch parliament against bill approving mass deportations. Sign reads, “after nine years in the Netherlands, does she have to leave?”

have official refugee status, according to an online report of Radio Netherlands.

“Just look at the number of illegal immigrants still in the city,” said Verdonk last November, of “people whose asylum application has been turned down, but are still occupying homes where they no longer belong. Just start enforcing deporting them and there’ll be plenty of room.”

In an attempt to keep a close eye on

asylum-seekers who may have been denied permits to stay in the country, city authorities in Hertogenbosch have begun handing out special identity cards to undocumented immigrants in exchange for a free bed and meals.

Meanwhile, the national government has set up two large immigration jails with a total of 600 cells near the airports in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

# In talks, grocery bosses press union for concessions

Continued from front page

Kroger and Albertsons rally as negotiators meet for the ninth straight day,” said the subheading.

The stocks of these grocery giants trade at or near their 52-week highs. Wall Street financiers hope that the intransigence of the bosses will soon be paying off in lower costs for the employers by a further proliferation of “Wal-Mart” type stores—that is, intensifying the exploitation of labor.

From the beginning, the employers forced the strike on the union and have held the initiative in the confrontation.

The bosses are pressing for some combination of lower starting pay and longer wage progressions that top out at substantially lower levels for new hires, a longer waiting period for new hires to get second-rate medical benefits, and other takeaways. Such concessions would divide the workforce at

Safeway-owned Vons/Pavilions, Kroger-owned Ralphs, and Albertsons supermarkets. Striking and locked out employees would be faced with a substantial shift of medical costs onto their backs.

The negotiations restarted after a February 4 proposal by the union to submit the dispute to binding arbitration and ask their members to return to work under the old contract. In a sign of strength, the three big grocery chains rejected the offer. The talks are now reportedly being “supervised” by federal mediator Peter J. Hurtgen.

As the renewed negotiations began, the big-business press reported that the two sides were far apart. “Union officials said they have offered hundreds of millions of dollars in savings to the employers, but the chains have rejected the proposals,” KABC TV reported February 16. “Negotiators for the supermarket chains contend the union

counter-offer still would raise their labor costs above acceptable levels.”

Across the country, the grocery bosses seem to have some wind in their sails at the moment.

The February 17 *Washington Post* reported that the 350-store chain Stop & Shop in New England “backed down” from some of its concession demands. But under a recently ratified contract covering 37,000 workers at that company, the grocery chain won a significant decrease in labor costs. The *Post* said that “new part-time workers will wait two years to qualify for health benefits, up from one year. Those part-time workers will also be paid differently. It now takes a part-time worker three years to reach an hourly wage of \$9.50; under the new contract, it will take six years.”

The grocery bosses explain their intransigence by pointing to the specter of non-union Wal-Mart “supercenters” moving into California. These stores sell a full line of groceries along with other merchandise. The first one to open in this state will be in La Quinta, near Palm Springs, California, this spring. Dozens more are projected, posing the challenge to the labor movement—and especially to the UFCW. In order to stand up to the grocery bosses, the union will have to take on organizing Wal-Mart workers as a fight that must be waged alongside the battle against Safeway and the other grocery chains, in California and nationally.

Such a joint fight would mean abandoning the union’s heavy reliance on Democratic Party public officials to use zoning restrictions and other ploys to keep Wal-Mart from setting up shop. The UFCW and the Teamsters union have raised more

than \$1 million to finance an “anti-Wal-Mart” campaign in the region. But to date, Wal-Mart has not had much difficulty in defeating these campaigns when they have cropped up around the country.

Since moving into the grocery business in 1988, the Arkansas-based retail giant is now the largest seller of groceries in the United States. On average Wal-Mart’s grocery prices are 10 to 15 percent lower than competing grocery chains. Wal-Mart is the largest U.S. private employer, with 1.3 million employees worldwide, nearly 3,000 stores, and annual sales of \$245 billion. Not a single one of its stores is organized by a union. The company recently collaborated with immigration authorities that raided many of its stores as part of government-boss collusion to defeat union-organizing efforts by targeting undocumented immigrant workers who labor under the lowest pay and worst conditions at Wal-Mart.

UFCW officials were not prepared for the stubborn insistence on deep cuts by Safeway and the other chains here. From the beginning of the strike, Safeway’s chairman declared that the bosses’ contract offer was “as good as it gets,” and that they were ready to take “debt” to reach their goals.

Rick Icaza, president of UFCW Local 770, said in an interview in the February 16 *Los Angeles Times* that “he knew the bargaining would be contentious but that he had always worked out solutions with the stores—and expected he could again.”

“He was wrong, by at least four months,” the *Times* commented. “I felt that by having that relationship... we had passed the era of a need for strikes,” Icaza said. “I thought those

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## THE MILITANT

### What’s behind the crisis in Haiti?

*The government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti is crumbling under a military revolt that has Washington’s tacit backing. The ‘Militant’ brings you news and analysis on the roots of this crisis, and its impact on working people. Don’t miss a single issue!*



Brutal rebels enjoying U.S. support rally February 19 in Gonaïves.

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# UN chief backs U.S. scheme for ‘Iraqi gov’t’

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has placed the UN seal of approval on Washington’s preparations to stage-manage the appointment of an interim Iraqi government later this year without direct elections. The ballyhooed “transfer of sovereignty” will not affect the Anglo-American–led military occupation, which is enforced by 155,000 troops.

U.S. officials have stressed the open-ended character of the military occupation and the likely expansion of similar imperialist assaults in the region. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said in a February 9 presentation that the overrunning of Afghanistan and Iraq is “only the beginning” of a decades-long “war on terrorism.”

Annan said February 19 that he favored establishing a caretaker Iraqi government until elections can be held. His remarks came in response to the initial report from Lakhdar Brahimi, his envoy to Iraq. Brahimi echoed the arguments of U.S. officials against a popular vote, saying, “Conducting elections without adequate preparations could lead to even more disagreements” among Iraqi politicians and parties.

The White House had pressed Annan to send the delegation when its original blueprint for the transfer—involving so-called caucuses to choose representatives—was opposed by leaders of the Shiite community, which makes up 60 percent of the population. More than 100,000 people marched January 19 in Baghdad and other cities in support of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani’s call for direct nationwide elections.

Al-Sistani, who called off the protests when the UN delegation was announced, said he accepted the verdict of Annan’s envoy. “It’s never been black or white for Ayatollah Sistani, but he wasn’t sure whether to believe the Americans,” said Adil Hilawi, a Shiite representative on the 25-member Governing Council, handpicked by U.S. officials and inaugurated in July 2003. “But having the UN, which is objective and neutral, also say no to elections is something we can explain to our people.”

Paul Bremer, the head of the U.S.-established Coalition Provisional Authority, said in a February 19 press briefing in Baghdad that “sovereignty returns to an Iraqi government on June 30th.” At the same time, he made it clear that the transfer of formal authority has nothing to do with U.S. withdrawal.

“I think people tend to confuse the 30th of June and the departure of the coalition authority, which I represent, with somehow the end of American presence in Iraq,” he told a reporter. “And this is, of course, not true. First of all, the Coalition Authority will become the world’s largest embassy.... There will be thousands of American government officials from all of our major departments still working here, working with the Iraqi people on reconstruction, working with them on their political developments. And there will be 100,000 American troops and tens of thousands of coalition forces still here until such time as the Iraqi security forces are able to assure their own security, which will not be as early as July.”

While stating these facts point blank, Bremer explained that the Anglo-American forces will use the so-called transfer of authority to an Iraqi administration to get rid of the nasty term “occupation” now used around the world to describe accurately the imperialist takeover. “The major change that

happens on June 30th,” he said, “is that the coalition authority passes sovereignty back to the Iraqi government, the occupation ends and coalition forces are no longer occupying forces; they are in partnership with the Iraqi people to protect Iraqi security.”

As U.S. officials hold off proposing a new blueprint for the transfer until the UN delegation presents its final recommendations, some leaders of the Shiite and Kurdish communities have called for “partial elections” to be held in the north and south. Under this scheme, Washington’s proposal of caucus appointments would be revived for the center of the country, which is where the 20 percent of Iraq’s population that is Sunni Muslim is concentrated.

Adnan Pachachi, a member of the Governing Council and a Sunni, spoke against the proposal, saying, “It doesn’t make any sense, only the north and the south voting. If the center of Iraq is not involved, how could Iraq be considered a sovereign power?” Pachachi and others have recommended that a larger council serve as a caretaker government.

U.S. officials rationalize their opposition to elections and the continued presence of a massive U.S. military force in the same terms: both are necessary, they say, to protect fledgling Iraqi democracy against attacks by “terrorists,” leftovers of the Saddam Hussein regime, and factional and ethnic breakdown. “If we withdraw prematurely,” wrote Lawrence Diamond in the February 19 *Wall Street Journal*, “the country could become a hellish combination of Lebanon and the Congo.”

Diamond, who is a member of the conservative Hoover Institution and an adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority,

## U.S. Navy can board Liberian-flagged ships

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

A new deal signed by Washington with the Liberian government is a further step along the road of expanded piracy by the U.S. government and its partners in the “war on terrorism.”

The agreement gives the U.S. Navy the authority to board and search any ship flying the Liberian flag. All that is required is the assertion by U.S. officials that they believe the cargo may include parts or designs for “weapons of mass destruction,” plus the issuance of two hours’ notice to the Liberian government.

The Liberian regime that signed the agreement was formed last year after opposition armies forced Charles Taylor, the former prime minister, to step down, with U.S. backing.

The February 19 *Wall Street Journal* said that the new deal had been “little noticed by the media.” It added that “Liberia is the world’s second-largest shipping registry.... One third of the oil the U.S. imports arrives in tankers flying the Liberian flag.

“The U.S. hopes to conclude similar pacts with other flag-of-convenience states,” the *Journal* continued. “It isn’t saying which ones, but Panama, with the world’s largest registry, is likely on the list.”

The *Journal* described the deal as “a useful end run around the limitations of current international law. Without the pact, the U.S. would be prohibited from boarding Liberian-flagged ships carrying suspicious goods unless they were first shown to be carrying illegal goods or until they entered

on which it defaulted in January 2002, according to a February 21 Reuters dispatch. So far the government has refused to discuss demands for payment of an additional \$18 billion in interest accrued since its default.

The government of Nestor Kirchner has offered to pay 25 cents on the dollar to banks in Milan, Tokyo, Frankfurt, and New York for this debt. Argentina’s creditors have demanded payment of no less than 65 percent.

The Kirchner administration has said it cannot pay more on the debt “without endangering a faster-than-expected recovery from deep economic crisis and inflicting more pain on the 50 percent of the population living in poverty, on just a couple of dollars a day,” Reuters reported.



Spanish troops board U.S. ship in Arabian Sea January 17 during 16-nation “Sea Saber” exercise led by Washington to train imperialist navies in high seas piracy.

added: “The overriding question confronting the U.S.—as the inevitable leader of a supporting coalition for democracy—is whether we have the vision and backbone to see this through.”

Speaking at the National Defense University’s Africa Center February 9, Wolfowitz placed the occupation of Iraq in the broader framework of the U.S. capitalist rulers’ interventions abroad. “Right after September 11 [2001],” he said, “I heard my boss, Secretary [of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld, make some comments to the effect that while there were obviously major differences between the war on terrorism and the Cold War, that just as the Cold War had been a very long one, this promised to

be a very long one.”

Wolfowitz said that although he initially saw this as an exaggeration, “Increasingly it’s become clear to me that of course it’s going to be decades long.” He went on: “It took decades of misrule, misgovernment, mistreatment in various ways of people of the Middle East to generate the literally thousands of terrorists that we deal with today, and a single victory in Afghanistan or a single victory in Iraq or even the two together, even having literally thousands of terrorists detained and captured not only by the United States but by our European allies, by the Indonesians, a long list of countries, that’s only the beginning of addressing the problem.”

U.S. waters. By then in this world of WMD [weapons of mass destruction], it might be too late.”

The accord is part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that Washington launched last June.

In a related move, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell has threatened Syria with new sanctions. “Syria has not done what we demanded of it,” he told the Senate foreign relations committee in mid-February.

In a trip to Damascus last May, Powell instructed the government to clamp down on Palestinian organizations and other so-called terrorists within its borders, hand over Iraqi assets allegedly stored there, and stop the flow of men and weapons into Iraq that Powell claimed were aiding those resisting the U.S. occupation.

Syrian chargé d’affaires in Washington Muhammad Khaddam said his government

did not have the resources to shut tight its 360-mile border with its eastern neighbor. According to the *Financial Times*, the Syrian government “claims to have closed down the offices of militant Palestinian groups in Damascus, but Mr. Khaddam said that the expulsion of the militants was hampered by Syrian law and the lack of a destination for extradition.”

Powell told the Senate committee that Washington would give Syria up to six months before imposing additional sanctions spelled out in the Syria Accountability Act, passed by Congress late last year.

“We are at a crossroads with Syria, a country that has never been committed to working with us, even though they throw us a few crumbs now and then,” said U.S. congressman Eliot Engel, the author of the bill. “Libya has changed its tune but Syria does nothing.”

## Grocery bosses press for concessions

Continued from page 2  
days were over.”

As part of their strategy, the employers have highlighted the high salaries UFCW officials get, compared to low wages of union members, implying that the labor officialdom is simply out to preserve its dues base and “boss-like” standard of living, not to protect workers. The capitalist media have gone after UFCW officials for their “generous” salaries. Icaza, for example, is reportedly paid \$273,000 a year. The *Times* said that Icaza, 70, is “a multimillionaire from decades of investing in Southern California real estate.”

The same daily celebrated the “more resolute” stance of Safeway and the other grocers in its February 11 edition. “By contrast, tactics hailed by the UFCW as silver bullets have been tried and discarded. The union persuaded the Teamsters to join the strike, but they stuck it out for only 30 days. The AFL-CIO was called in, then told to hold off, then allowed to take over national strategy.”

UFCW officials predicted that the Teamsters union move to bolster the strike at the big distribution centers would be a “staggering blow” to the chains. But the grocery bosses responded with “contingency plans” that included hiring hundreds of strikebreakers to drive the trucks from the distribution centers to the supermarkets. One of the scab-herding outfits has supplied strikebreakers at “coal mines and auto

plants,” according to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*.

On the numbers of strikers and locked-out workers involved, a spokesperson for the UFCW said February 12 that the figure used earlier of 70,000 workers affected by this conflict included 11,000 who have not been on strike or locked out. They work for grocery stores that have a “me too” agreement with the union to accept whatever contract comes out of the negotiations with Safeway, Ralphs, and Albertsons.

Some 9 percent of the striking Vons and Pavilions workers have reportedly crossed the picket lines. A big majority of the striking and locked out workers are determined to last “one day longer” than their bosses. At many stores they have been backed by the majority of shoppers who have gone elsewhere to buy food.

### Correction

The article in last week’s issue, “Cuban 5 prepare appeal of conviction,” incorrectly reported Atlanta as the location of the court in which Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labiñino will submit appeals to their frame-up convictions. The appeals will be heard in Miami by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, which is based in Atlanta.

## Argentine economy grew 8.4% in 2003

BY SAM MANUEL

The Argentine economy expanded 8.4 percent last year, according to initial figures released by the government in Buenos Aires and reported in the February 20 *Wall Street Journal*. The report said the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) also increased by 11 percent.

The expansion has been fueled by a 70 percent devaluation of the Argentine peso in 2002 that substantially boosted the country’s exports, especially in agriculture. The devaluation affected working people most adversely, resulting in slashing of real wages and a sharp rise in prices of basic necessities.

Buenos Aires also announced it will pay up to \$200 million in service fees to six banks to restructure the \$88 billion debt



# Protest ‘drew world’s attention to Puerto Rico’

## 50th anniversary of 1954 armed demonstration in Congress for independence

Fifty years ago March 1, four Puerto Rican Nationalists—Rafael Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, and Irving Flores—carried out an armed demonstration in the U.S. House of Representatives against U.S. colonial policy in Puerto Rico. Oscar Collazo, another member of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, took part in a 1950 attack on Blair House, President Harold Truman’s temporary residence.

The five Nationalists spent more than a quarter of a century in U.S. prisons for their pro-independence actions. Faced with a growing international defense campaign, the U.S. government freed Figueroa Cordero in 1978, and the remaining four in 1979.

In commemoration of this important milestone in the history of the fight for Puerto Rican independence, the *Militant* is reprinting excerpts from an interview with Rafael Cancel Miranda.

The selection is based on an interview conducted by Rollande Girard and Jacob Perasso in April 1998, and subsequent phone interviews with *Militant* reporter Martín Koppel, in which Cancel Miranda recounted some of the background to those dramatic events and the subsequent political work he became involved in while in prison. The interview is published in full in the Pathfinder pamphlet, *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*. Copyright © 1998 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



**BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
WITH ROLLANDE GIRARD  
AND JACOB PERASSO**

Cancel Miranda became involved in Puerto Rico’s independence movement as a youth in the early 1940s in the western city of Mayagüez.

“My father was the president of the Nationalist Party committee in Mayagüez,” he said. “I was brought up among Nationalists. I grew up hearing the name of Pedro Albizu Campos. He and my father were comrades-in-arms and friends, and when he would come to speak in Mayagüez he would stay in our home.” Albizu Campos was the central leader of the Nationalist Party and the Puerto Rican independence movement for several decades.

On March 21, 1937, Cancel Miranda’s father and mother attended a Nationalist Party rally in the city of Ponce that was attacked by the police on orders from Gen. Blanton Winship, the colonial governor. The cops fired on the peaceful gathering, killing twenty-one people and wounding two hundred. “Blanton Winship, an American who had been appointed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was praised for ‘defending democracy’ by slaughtering our people,” said Cancel Miranda, who at the time was six years old.

“My parents survived the massacre. My mother went there dressed in white and returned dressed in red, covered in the blood of the dead, whose bodies she had to crawl over as the bullets flew overhead.” He would never forget that image....

Following World War II, widespread resistance to Washington’s attempt to impose English as the main language of instruction in Puerto Rico’s schools forced the U.S. government to drop that effort. Cancel Miranda relates that “in high school, when they tried to make us all speak English in class, we organized a student strike in defense of our language, and I along with others was accused of organizing it. They kicked me out of school for a year and barred me from studying in my town. I had to go to San Juan to finish school, even though I

had only about two months to go before graduating.”

Washington also had a hard time convincing Puerto Rican youth to join the army of the colonial master that occupied their homeland. During World War II, scores of Puerto Rican youth had been jailed for refusing to serve in the U.S. armed forces. During the 1950–53 Korean War, some one hundred thousand youth on the island refused to be drafted. In 1948 Cancel Miranda, then eighteen, was one of those who said no to the U.S. draft.

“One day,” he recounts, “I was walking to school in San Juan with other students, and there was a car with four men sitting in the corner. I saw their faces and knew they weren’t Puerto Ricans. They were four FBI agents. I handed my books to the other students to take them to the place where I was living, because I figured I might not return. They arrested me and charged me with refusing the U.S. draft. Later they arrested another six or eight youths.

“To me it didn’t make sense to be in the same army that invades your country and massacres your people. If you’re going to fight, you should fight *them*.

“The U.S. court here in Puerto Rico—they call it federal but it’s a foreign court—sentenced me to two years and one day in prison. They put me on a plane along with five or six of us and sent us to the U.S. prison in Tallahassee, Florida.”

Cancel Miranda was in jail in Tallahassee when Washington launched its war of aggression against Korea in 1950. That same year, the Nationalist Party led an armed rebellion in Puerto Rico, which the colonial regime brutally crushed. Thousands were arrested, including Cancel Miranda’s father.

“When I returned from prison in 1951 I got married,” he continues. “But just eleven days later, they wanted to lock me up again for refusing the draft. My wife Carmen and my sister Zoraida told me: don’t let yourself get arrested!

“So I went to Cuba under a different name and lived there for fourteen months. In Havana I landed a job in the construction of the tunnel under the Almendares river. I worked that job several months. Later, the dictator Fulgencio Batista, who was a U.S. puppet, put me in jail and deported me to Puerto Rico.” Batista had come to power through a military coup in March 1952.

A short time later Cancel Miranda moved to Brooklyn, where he joined his wife. There he got involved in the effort to oppose Washington’s attempts to prevent Puerto Rico’s colonial status from being discussed at the United Nations.

“From the end of World War II until 1952, the U.S. government had to report to the United Nations on Puerto Rico,” he explains. “There was a UN committee on territories that were not independent, and Puerto Rico was on that list as a colony. The U.S. government wanted to take Puerto Rico off the list so it wouldn’t have to report and show its warts to the world. In 1953 they took their case to the United Nations, claiming that in 1952 we had by a sovereign, free vote become a ‘commonwealth.’ They claimed we were happy and content.

“I got involved in lobbying at the United Nations. A couple of times my wife went with me to speak to the ambassador of India, a friend of Puerto Rico who fought for our position at the United Nations. But the Yankees won a victory and got Puerto Rico taken off the list of non-sovereign countries. They presented us to the world as satisfied slaves.” Washington even engineered the expulsion of the official observer the Nationalist Party had had at the United



**Lolita Lebrón (left), Rafael Cancel Miranda (center), and Andrés Figueroa Cordero (at right) held by police March 1, 1954, following armed demonstration in Congress.**

Nations since 1945.

In response, Cancel Miranda said, he and three other Nationalists living in New York “decided to carry out a demonstration that would draw the world’s attention to the truth about Puerto Rico, that would tell the world that there were Puerto Ricans who were willing to die for our independence and that the U.S. government was fooling the United Nations and the world—including my people—with this so-called commonwealth.”

The other three were Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irving Flores, and Lolita Lebrón. At the time, Cancel Miranda, twenty-three years old, was a press operator in a shoe factory in New York. Figueroa Cordero was working in a butcher shop, Flores in a furniture factory, and Lebrón in a garment shop as a sewing machine operator.

The U.S. rulers, Cancel Miranda stated, “had the money and the arms, but we had the moral force. We went to Washington to carry out an armed demonstration—we knew that if we went with signs we weren’t going to get attention. There we fired inside the U.S. Capitol on March 1, 1954.” The shots, fired from the spectators’ gallery, wounded five congressmen.

“They put us on trial in Washington, D.C. They sentenced the three men to seventy-five years and Lolita to fifty years. Then they took us to New York, where we were tried for ‘conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence’ and sentenced to six more years. Can you imagine us thinking we could overthrow the U.S. government with little pistols? I wish I could!”

The kind of treatment the Nationalists were routinely subjected to increasingly became public knowledge and fueled the campaign for their release. When Cancel Miranda’s father died in 1977, his supporters campaigned to allow him to attend the funeral. “I was in Puerto Rico for seven hours for my father’s funeral,” he related. “But my people jumped with anger when they learned that at the St. Louis airport, on the way to Puerto Rico, they put me in a dog cage. While waiting for the next plane, they took the dog out and put me in. I had mentioned it casually to people, because I had been in prison for years and it was a normal thing to me, but to them it was unimaginable.”

For years, Cancel Miranda remarked, “I kept thinking up escape plans, because I wasn’t resigned to die in prison of old age. When the campaign for our release began, that’s when I stopped thinking about escaping because the campaign became political work for us.”

The broad and growing worldwide campaign for the release of the Puerto Rican Nationalists was the product of, and part of, the deep political radicalization in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. It was fed by the victorious mass struggle by African Americans that brought down the Jim Crow segregation system, by the anti-imperialist audacity of the Cuban revolution, by the deepening opposition to the U.S. rulers’ attempts to crush the

Vietnamese national liberation struggle, and by the resurgence of the Puerto Rican independence movement. In Puerto Rico itself, defiance of the draft became so massive despite scores of arrests that the U.S. government eventually decided to drop most prosecutions of resisters on the island.

This social and political upheaval found expression behind prison bars as well. By the late 1960s, there were increasing numbers of prisoners engaged in political activity, and Cancel Miranda joined with them.

The Cuban revolution had a profound impact on him. “As I heard more and more about Cuba,” he noted, “I realized it was not just another military coup like so many others in Latin America, but a true social transformation. I internalized it to the point that the Cuban revolution has become as important to me as the fight for the freedom of my people.”

When the Chicano struggle developed in the United States, “in prison I became involved in that fight, including the defense of Corky Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice,” he said. Gonzales and the Chicano rights organization he led, the Denver Crusade for Justice, were the target of a government frame-up in the early 1970s.

Every September 16, Cancel Miranda would join the Mexican and Chicano prisoners in marking Mexico’s independence day with a work stoppage. “I also got involved in the Black struggle. We did many other things, even producing newspapers like the Chicano prisoners’ paper *Aztlán*. I also wrote a couple of articles for the *Militant*.

“In other words, I was never really imprisoned. I never felt defeated. I kept fighting inside prison and always had the hope of getting out—one way or another. When you resign yourself to the idea that you’re not going to get out, that’s when you become a convict. The prison becomes your world. But none of us resigned ourselves.”

**Celebrate the**

**50th** Anniversary of the  
armed demonstration in  
Congress for independence of  
Puerto Rico

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**Sunday, February 29**

**1:00 PM**

***El Maestro***

Cultural and Educational Center

**700 Elton Avenue, Bronx, N.Y.**

*Sponsored by the Puerto Rican  
Nationalist Party-New York*

*Further Reading from Pathfinder*



**Puerto Rico: Independence is a necessity**

*By Rafael Cancel Miranda*

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda—one of five Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979—speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. Also available in Spanish. \$3.00

**Order online at [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)**



# Utah strikers address union locals in West

**Continued from front page**  
strike against CW Mining, also known as Co-Op, the Utah coal miners continue to broaden support for their struggle throughout the Western coalfields.

“On September 22, we were fired from Co-Op for walking out in defense of a co-worker and demanding safer conditions,” Salazar told the IUOE members. “They threw the cops on us and kicked everybody out of mine property. Today after five months in our fight we ask you for your support.”

The New Mexico miners applauded and began asking questions and making comments in support of their brothers and sisters at Co-Op. “We Navajos suffer the same discrimination that our brothers from the south face,” said one of the IUOE members. “We should throw all of our support to help the Mexican miners. That’s my opinion.”

Wars Peterman, Local 953 president, said that even though they had just signed a contract, “tomorrow we might need their support to help us too. We have other contracts expiring in 2006 and 2008. That’s a good reason to solidarize with the Co-Op miners.”

The 438 surface miners represented by Local 953 voted 249 to 169 to approve a four-year contract that gives all workers a \$1.00 wage increase, followed by annual increases of 2 percent, 1.75 percent, and 2 percent for the remaining three years. They also won a raise in the allowance for Native Healing, or traditional medicine.

At the February 18 afternoon Local 953 meeting, Co-Op miners Ricardo Chávez and Celso Panduro addressed another group of mostly Navajo miners. Chávez, a rock picker at Co-Op, said, “We are not giving up. We are determined to win. We have gained support in California and other states and are getting more backing from people like you.”

“At Co-Op the bosses intimidated workers to operate unsafe equipment,” said Panduro, a roof bolter for six years at the mine. “They take away your pay if you question anything. Many miners have injured themselves working on machinery that the bosses refuse to fix.” Many of the Local 953 members present nodded their heads in agreement when they heard this remark.

Before departing for Utah, the Co-Op miners invited their New Mexico brothers to visit their picket line.

At the request of Wars Peterman, the Co-Op miners also drafted a thank-you

letter that included a request for a financial donation from Local 953. “We would like to ask for your support in this time of need,” the letter said. “We would like to request a financial donation towards our struggle for union recognition. We thank you for your invitation to address two of your local meetings. We also invite you to our picket line in Huntington, Utah, at the Bear Canyon mine. An Injury to One is an Injury to All! ¡Sí se puede!”

## Visit to Kemmerer, Wyoming

Two days later, four other Co-Op miners spoke before a meeting of UMWA Local 1307 in Kemmerer, Wyoming. Gonzalo Salazar, an underground mechanic for four years at Co-Op, described their struggle for union protection. “I told them that for many years there’s been a lot of abuse, lies, and a false union made up of bosses who victimize the miners,” Salazar said in an interview. “It’s important for us to keep gaining support to organize a real union with the UMWA.”

Dallas Wolf, an UMWA representative who lives near Kemmerer, introduced the Co-Op miners. Miners present said they remembered the Co-Op miners’ delegation that addressed the UMWA Special Convention in Las Vegas in late September of last year.

UMWA Local 1307 members won a big victory in their walkout in August 2000. During that battle, they defeated attempts by Pittsburgh and Midway Coal Co. (P&M) in its attempt to impose 12-hour workdays, seven days a week, and force miners to pay a portion of their medical benefits. The Kemmerer miners along with UMWA Local 1332 at the McKinley mine in New Mexico, a local of mostly Navajo miners, joined forces in the fight. They later celebrated a joint victory against P&M, preserving an eight-hour workday, higher pay, and a reduction in the probation period.

Following the union meeting, several

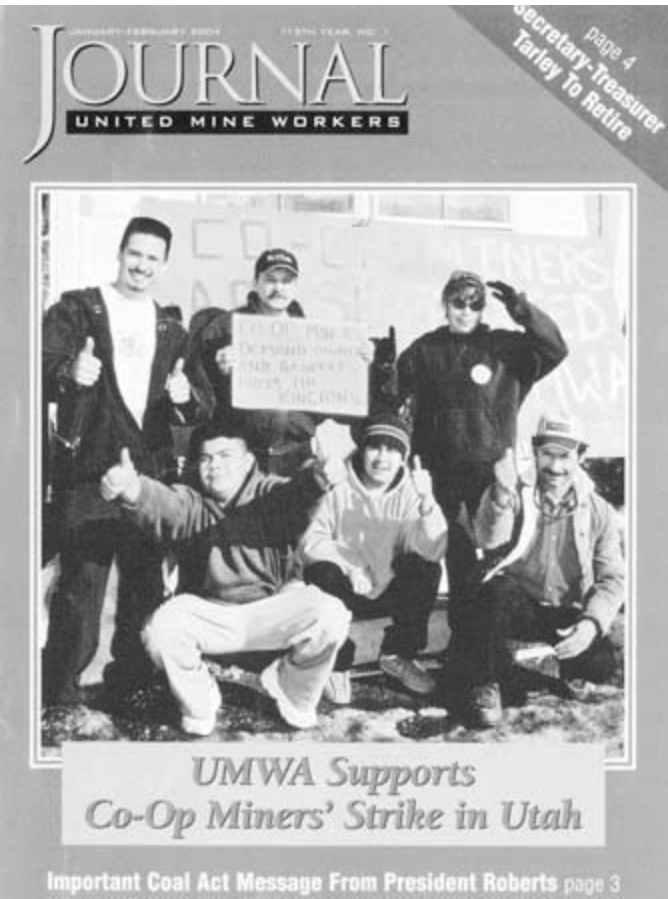
members of UMWA Local 1307 took the Co-Op miners to their union offices where they presented them with a check for \$500. The miners were also given a check of \$500 from the UMWA local representing the city workers in Kemmerer. The Utah miners invited Local 1307 members to come join the picket line in Huntington.

## Kemmerer strike

The Kemmerer miners described their walkout four years ago. A very strong women’s auxiliary, called “The Miners Backbone”—which continues to meet to this day—was decisive in that battle, they said. The Kemmerer UMWA members loaded the Utah strikers’ car with all of the plastic plates, cups, and silverware that were left over from their picket lines during the 2000 strike.

UMWA Local 1307 Financial Secretary Larry Linville and Robert Clarke, the local’s vice president, treated the strikers to a sloppy Joe and chili dinner at the local Kemmerer museum. They encouraged the strikers to stay strong and offered to help contact other union locals in Wyoming.

Back in Huntington, miners at the nearby Deer Creek mine who are members of UMWA Local 1769 delivered a truck full



January-February issue of *United Mine Workers Journal* features the struggle by miners at the Co-Op mine to win union recognition. A four-page spread inside is titled, “Co-Op miners’ strike: A Pivotal Battle for Workers’ Rights.”

of food to the Co-Op miners on February 18. Donated items included milk, eggs, ground beef, bacon, fresh fruits, and vegetables. “We’ll do it again in two weeks,” said Lou Shelley, president of that local. “Just let us know what you need.”

Financial and other donations for the strike can be sent to the Co-Op Miners Relief Fund, c/o UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, Utah 84501.

# HQ Appeal supporters head for New York

BY NORTON SANDLER

CLEVELAND—As this issue goes to press, pledges to the 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal stands at \$227,300, surpassing the \$225,000 goal. More than \$198,000 has been collected, leaving \$29,300 to go.

*Mission St. (between College and St. Mary’s) Donation requested. For more information call: 415-584-2135.*

## FLORIDA

### Tampa

**A celebration of International Women’s Day**  
A panel discussion. Friday, March 5, 7:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, La Place Shopping Center, 1441 E. Fletcher Ave. at 15th Street. (Second floor, entrance in rear) 813-910-8507.*

## NEW YORK

### Manhattan

**Behind the Brutal, Rightist Insurgency in Haiti.** Speaker: Arrin Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party. Saturday, March 6, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program. *306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, (Enter at 36th street, elevator on north side of building) 212-564-3841.*

## WASHINGTON

### Seattle

**Build the National March for Women’s Lives, Defend the Right to Choose Abortion.** In celebration of International Women’s Day: A panel discussion. Friday March 5, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program. *5418 Rainier Avenue South. 206-323-1755.*

# —CALENDAR—

## CALIFORNIA

### Berkeley

**End the Travel Ban on Cuba! Stop the prosecution of Fred Burks!** Speaker: Fred Burks, presidential interpreter who is case #001 for challenging the U.S. travel ban to Cuba, others. Thursday, March 4, 6:30 p.m. *Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge St., 510-644-9260. Sponsored by Berkeley-Palma Soriano Sister City Association.*

# —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Fighting Back Against Police Brutality, the Death Penalty, and the Prison System.** Speakers: Norma Martínez, mother of Gonzalo Martínez, killed by Downey cops; Javier Quezada, father of Javier Quezada Jr., killed by Pasadena cops; Lawrence Reyes, Puerto Rican Alliance; Nan Bailey, Socialist Workers Party. Friday, March 5, 7:30 pm, *4229 S. Central Avenue (between Vernon and Martin Luther King) Donation requested. 323-233-9372.*

### San Francisco

**The Discussion on Gay Marriage and Why Working People Should Support Civil Rights for Gays.** Speaker: Mark Gilsdorf, Socialist Workers Party. Friday, March 5, 7:30 pm, *3926*

**FREE THE CUBAN FIVE!**

**MARCH 5 NEW YORK**

**EMERGENCY MEETING**

**SEIU Local 1199 HALL,**

**MARTIN LUTHER KING AUDITORIUM**

**310 WEST 43RD ST.**

**B/T 8TH AND 9TH AVES.**

**6:30 P.M.**

**Speakers include: Orlando Requeijo Gual, Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations; Michael Steven Smith, Nat’l Lawyers Guild; and others**

New or increased contributions made the third week of February include \$1,900 from Toronto, Canada; \$1,000 from Raleigh, North Carolina; \$500 each from contributors in Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, and New York City; plus several donations of \$100–\$250 from supporters in Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Houston; New York City; and Newark, New Jersey.

In numerous cities across the United States, supporters of the Appeal are now finalizing plans to come to New York for the February 28–29 weekend. They will participate there in the Grand Opening of the new international headquarters for the communist movement—the construction of which has been funded by the Appeal from beginning to end. All *Militant* readers are urged to join in celebrating this special occasion by taking part in the February 29 public meeting, in particular. (See ad on front page.)

Events that weekend will include a day of putting the final touches to the construction and setting up of the Socialist Workers Party National Office, the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* newsroom, and a new Pathfinder Bookstore—to be accomplished Saturday, February 28.

In addition to working on plans for transportation and accommodation in New York, Appeal organizers in every area are putting top priority on collecting the final outstanding pledges.

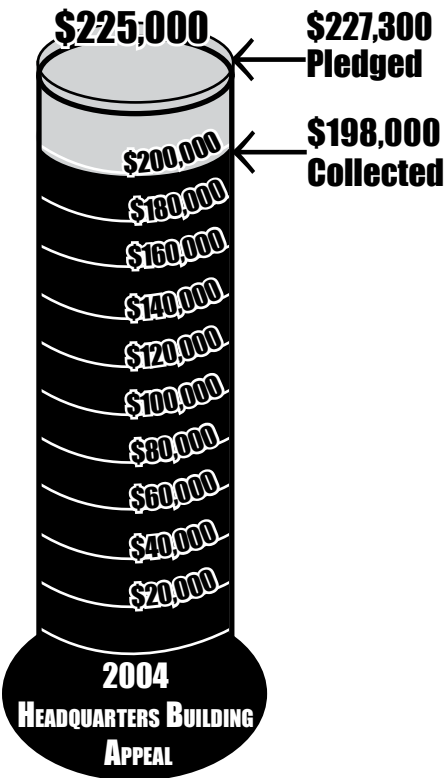
Construction on this new facility began January 2. Generous and timely contributions to the fund from across the United States and internationally has meant that the work has stayed on schedule and that construction materials, furniture, and fixtures could be purchased when they were needed.

In fact, this issue of the *Militant* is the first to be produced by the staff out of the paper’s new newsroom. With the relocation of the socialist periodicals under its belt, the crew that concentrates on moving tasks is now in the process of helping move and set up the SWP National Office and Pathfinder bookstore in the new premises.

The final push by the volunteer work crew to complete the construction in time for the Grand Opening was reinforced the

past few days by new volunteers from Vancouver, British Columbia; London; Gothenburg, Sweden; and Auckland, New Zealand. New volunteers also came from Chicago; Pittsburgh; northeast Pennsylvania; and Tampa, Florida. The crews are now finishing cabinetwork, plumbing for the kitchen and bathrooms, ducting for the air conditioning system, and painting.

In the final days of the effort, serious attention is needed to collect more than \$29,000 in outstanding pledges. All local Appeal organizers are urged to get these final payments gathered and sent in now—or, if need be, they can be hand-delivered in New York during the February 28–29 Grand Opening weekend. Checks or money orders should be made out to the 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal and sent c/o SWP National Office, 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.





# ‘Cuban Revolution must be understood by those in U.S. who seek to emulate it’

## Pathfinder Press president speaks at Havana book fair launching of ‘Aldabonazo’

The following are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters to 150 participants attending the presentation of *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58* by Armando Hart, organized as part of the recently concluded 13th International Book Fair in Havana, Cuba. Waters, who is president of Pathfinder Press, is the editor and author of the publisher’s preface.

The launching of the new Pathfinder edition was held Sunday, February 15, the last day of the book fair, at the Nicolás Guillén room. The book fair event was followed in subsequent days by two other public presentations, one at the Polytechnic University in Havana, the other at the national center of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Coverage of these events appears elsewhere in this issue.

Waters’s presentation is copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press. It is reprinted by permission.



### BY MARY-Alice WATERS

First, a thank you to everyone here this afternoon for the opportunity to join you in celebrating the publication, both in English and in Spanish, of this new edition of *Aldabonazo*.

On behalf of Pathfinder Press, I want to express to compañero Armando Hart and to compañera Eloísa Carreras our unqualified appreciation for the time and effort each of them dedicated to working with us to produce this invaluable book. It makes available another slice of the history and rich political lessons of the Cuban Revolution to a new, broader—and in English a very different—readership.

I’ll begin with a confession. Four years ago, when we first discussed this project with compañero Hart, we told him Pathfinder could not publish a book of more than 150 pages and asked him to propose some way to cut down the manuscript to come within that limit. Being the experienced political tactician he is, he demurred, saying, “You’re better judges than I am of what is useful in this book.” He offered to entertain any suggestions we might make.

The outcome of those suggestions is the book we have here today—a little over 400 pages. And that doesn’t count another 28 pages of magnificent photos that bring to life the events recounted here—bring them to life even for young workers and students in North America who have never visited Cuba and know little of its history.

The size of the book is not for want of trying to make it shorter. As Armando can attest, we worked at it. But as we studied and absorbed not just the narrative but also the rich trove of documents around which *Aldabonazo* is constructed, many never before in print, we decided in most cases to keep rather than cut. We realized that to do otherwise would slice into the muscle, and the political lessons would be unfolded in a less understandable, less rich, less useful manner for those of us who—unlike a good

many of you here present—didn’t live this history hour-by-hour with our lives on the line every day.

Pathfinder is not a publisher of history books, however necessary such works are. We publish the tools, the weapons *needed* by working people in the United States, as well as elsewhere around the world, in order to politically arm ourselves for class battles we all see coming towards us in the twenty-first century—battles that will determine the future—even the survival—of humanity. Like yourselves, we know we do not fight alone. But we also know that the hardest and most decisive battles are those that must be fought, and will be fought, within the belly of the monster.

That’s why we need the truth, with all its rich contradictions and complexities. We need access to our revolutionary history—warts and all—as told by the leaders who, from the inside, know how each action was weighed, how each decision was made.

The Cuban Revolution will never be copied. But it must be understood by those who seek to emulate its course.

That is what *Aldabonazo* strives to convey: the “fabric” of history, as the author writes. That’s why we’ve published it. And it explains who we’ve published it for.

### Class struggle in United States

For us, the importance of this book lies in what is already happening in the United States and, even more so, the lessons indicating what is coming.

The driving force behind U.S. foreign policy is neither irrationality nor stupidity. From increasingly aggressive protectionist

offensives dressed up as “free trade,” to wars of imperial conquest under the banner of combating terrorism, the U.S. rulers are driven by something far more deadly: the insatiable demands of capitalism itself.

Economic and social conditions today bear increasing resemblance to the overheated financial bubbles, underlying capitalist stagnation, sharpening trade conflicts, and interimperialist offensives that gave rise to the Great Depression and struggles of the 1930s, and culminated in the second imperialist slaughter of the twentieth century.

We can all see with some clarity what the U.S. rulers are doing in Afghanistan and at their Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, in Iraq and Korea, at their forward bases in Central Europe and along Central Asia’s Silk Road, and even their military buildup in Colombia—on the doorstep of our brothers and sisters in Venezuela.

But it is harder for those outside the United States to see concretely the consequences of the exact same policies *inside* the U.S. Yet Lenin’s insistence that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, not the other way around, is as true today as when he pointed it out.

The brutal offensive of the bosses and their government against the rights, working conditions, and living standards of working people in the United States began long before the election of George W. Bush. It began long before September 11, 2001. That offensive is driven by the capitalists’ increasingly desperate need to boost their profit rate enough to stabilize the bloated dollar, in the vain hope of holding off the ever-deepening consequences of their financial overextension, of flooding the world with a national paper currency to a degree never before seen in history, of the sharpest interimperialist conflicts since the opening decades of the last century.

Those same roots are giving rise to a dangerous coarsening of polemics among bourgeois forces in the United States. What begins as the violent politics of demagoguery is more ominous in its direction and consequences than those of us who did not live through the 1920s and 1930s yet realize.

The pressures on the working class and its defensive organizations, the trade unions, the drive to cut costs and intensify the ex-

ploitation of labor are unrelenting and accelerating. But all this is precisely what is also producing a new kind of resistance, new attitudes of solidarity across all generations of proletarian militants, and an intensifying desire by young militants to acquire competence in trade union strategy and tactics. In short, new examples of increasing stature, determination, and mutual respect among the toilers and our allies.

Many of you have heard about the strike by some 70,000 workers at giant supermarket chains in Southern California. Those workers are fighting, among other things, to maintain even the limited health-care coverage they’ve won through previous battles.

Less known, but perhaps even more significant are numerous other sharp struggles, such as the strike at Point Blank in Miami, a garment shop that contracts to make bullet-proof vests for police and military agencies. War or no war, and appeals to imperial patriotism aside, that work force—largely immigrants from across the Caribbean and Latin America, including Cubans, some of them recently arrived—has been in the streets time and again over the past year and a half. They are refusing to accept conditions such as the bosses’ attempt to impose a limit of one glass of water per workday for each employee—in Miami!—in order to reduce time “lost” to bathroom breaks.

Another example is the union organizing drive being waged by 75 coal miners in the western state of Utah. Almost all of them are immigrants from the Mexican state of Sinaloa, many of their leaders in their twenties, who finally said “enough.” They

decided to fight back, rejecting the extreme dangers of working with defective equipment, in mine shafts with only one exit, flooded with water, for which they were being paid a third to a quarter of what other miners in the region earned.

These miners are today engaged in a strike that has the support not only of the United Mine Workers of America, a union

Continued on next page



Militant/Bjorn Tirsén

Armando Hart, second from left, Cuban revolutionary leader and author of *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, speaks at February 15 launching of book’s new Pathfinder editions on closing day of 13th Havana International Book Fair. Other panelists, from left, are : Eloísa Carreras, who helped in the preparation of the first edition in 1997 as well as the Pathfinder editions; Mary-Alice Waters; Héctor Rodríguez Llompart, one of the leaders of the underground work in Havana during the Cuban Revolution and author of a short account included in *Aldabonazo*; Joan Cabo, president of Federation of University Students (FEU); and Eliades Acosta, director of National Library and author of preface to book’s Pathfinder editions.



Militant

“The pressures on the working class and its defensive organizations, the trade unions,” says Waters, are “producing a new kind of resistance, new attitudes of solidarity across all generations of proletarian militants, and an intensifying desire by young militants to acquire competence in trade union strategy and tactics.” Workers at Point Blank garment shop in Oakland Park, Florida (above), rally at plant gate in July 2002 to press their fight for union recognition.

decided to fight back, rejecting the extreme dangers of working with defective equipment, in mine shafts with only one exit, flooded with water, for which they were being paid a third to a quarter of what other miners in the region earned.

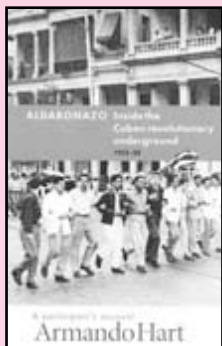
These miners are today engaged in a strike that has the support not only of the United Mine Workers of America, a union

Continued on next page

New from  
Pathfinder

### Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58

by Armando Hart



In this firsthand account by one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, we meet many of the men and women who in the 1950s led the urban underground in the fight against the brutal U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Together with their comrades-in-arms of the Rebel Army, they not only brought down the tyranny, their revolutionary actions and example worldwide changed the history of the 20th century—and the century to come. **Now ready for shipment!**

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# Cuba book launchings

## Continued from front page

Spanish editions by Pathfinder Press. The presentation of the book, which Hart authored, was a prominent feature of the 13th Havana International Book Fair.

In the week following the book fair *Aldabonazo* was also presented at two other meetings, one sponsored by the Federation of University Students (FEU) at the José Antonio Echeverría Polytechnic Institute and another organized by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Coverage of the three meetings was featured by Cuban television, radio, and newspapers.

In addition, Hart also addressed a meeting organized by the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) where some 90 copies of the book that had been purchased by the FAR were distributed.

## Revolutionary struggle

Hart is one of the generation of historic leaders of the Cuban revolutionary struggle, going back to the early 1950s. In *Aldabonazo* he tells the story of the men and women in cities and towns across Cuba who, following the March 1952 military coup by Fulgencio Batista, put concern about their lives behind them in order to organize to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship.

The urban underground movement led by the July 26 Movement, of which Hart was a central leader, waged a political battle, carried out sabotage actions, and organized funds, supplies, and reinforcements for Rebel Army forces based in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro the

revolutionary forces led a popular insurrection that toppled the Batista regime in January 1959 and opened the door to a socialist revolution.

Over the more than four decades since that victory, Armando Hart has continued to carry responsibilities as part of the central revolutionary leadership, serving as the first minister of education, as organization secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and for 20 years as minister of culture. Today Hart is a member of Cuba's Council of State and heads the Office of the José Martí Program. Martí, Cuba's national

hero, led the independence struggle in this country against Spanish colonial rule at the end of the 19th century, opposing U.S. imperialist designs on Latin America.

As at every book fair since 1986, a broad display of Pathfinder's 400-plus titles on revolutionary working-class politics was presented at a booth organized by the Pathfinder Bookshop in London. Over the past decade, a number of these titles have been presented at the now-annual book fair. Many have been books of interviews, writings, and speeches by leaders of the Cuban Revolution, including *Episodes*



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman

**February 19 presentation of *Aldabonazo* at José Antonio Echeverría Polytechnic Institute in Havana. Above, from left: Eloísa Carreras, Armando Hart, Mary-Alice Waters, and a leader of the Federation of University Students. Part of the audience is shown in inset.**



of the Cuban Revolutionary War and *The Bolivian Diary* by Ernesto Che Guevara; *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla* by Harry Villegas; *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*; *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*; *From the Escambray to the Congo* by Víctor Dreke; and *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon*.

Of the three major public meetings presenting *Aldabonazo* this year, the program at the book fair was the most extensive. Speakers there included Eloísa Carreras,

who edited the first edition of the book published in Cuba in 1997 and worked closely with Hart and Pathfinder to produce the new edition; Eliades Acosta, director of the José Martí National Library in Havana and author of the book's preface; Joan Cabo, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU); Héctor Rodríguez Llompart, a veteran of the Cuban revolutionary underground in the 1950s; and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book and author of the publisher's preface.

Among those attending the meeting were José Ramón Fernández, vice president of the Council of Ministers; a delegation from the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution headed by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Harry Villegas, its executive secretary; Col. Raúl Izquierdo, director of the Cuban History Institute; Enrique Oltuski, vice minister of the fishing industry and head of the July 26 urban underground in Villa Clara province in the 1950s; and many others who fought in the revolutionary struggle.

A leadership delegation from the FEU also attended.

Eloísa Carreras, a researcher at the National Library, spoke about how the first edition of *Aldabonazo*, published by the Havana-based Letras Cubanas and out of print for half a decade, came into being. She described how she had discovered Hart's writings about the Cuban Revolution after returning from several years of

**Continued on page 9**

## Talk by Waters at 'Aldabonazo' book presentation

### Continued from previous page

in the United States with a long tradition of struggle, but among growing sectors of the organized labor movement. In addition, the solidarity of students, churches, immigrants rights organizations, and others has begun turning this battle also into a social struggle throughout the region, with an impact that extends nationwide.

It is forces such as these, frequently involved in hard-fought battles, for whom we publish books like *Aldabonazo*. They are the ones whose struggles lead them to search for the experiences of others who have fought and won. And that, in turn, makes them more open to seeing through the lies about the Cuban Revolution. It makes working people more open to seeing through attempts to prejudice them against seeking out the truth about the kind of example Cuba continues to set.

And it is for people such as these that Pathfinder—with the help of Armando, Eloísa, and others they enlisted in the cause—worked to make this account as accessible as possible to those who may know little of Cuba's revolutionary history. That's the reason for the care we took in preparing a chronology that sketches the story from the Cry of Yara at the opening of Cuba's independence wars of the nineteenth century, to the naming of Fidel Castro as prime minister in the first government of workers and farmers in this hemisphere in 1959, as well as a glossary of more than 200 entries that provides information necessary for new readers to understand what they are reading.

### Rebutting a liberal myth

The release of the Pathfinder edition of *Aldabonazo* is timely for a second reason. It gives lie to one of the most persistent myths of the liberal left in the United States, one that has been given a new facelift with the recent publication of yet another crop of doctoral theses.

According to this mythology, there were deep political differences between the men and women who were formed as cadres of the Rebel Army in the Sierra, and those who led the July 26 Movement's forces in the clandestine struggle in the cities and towns, what came to be known as the *llano*. If the *llano* had prevailed over the *sierra* in the decisive final year of the revolutionary war, they argue, Cuba's revolution would have been a bourgeois democratic one—one that naturally looked to the democracy

of imperialist North America as a model to emulate—instead of consciously and unflickingly advancing toward the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas.

The extensive documents on which *Aldabonazo* is based provide ample evidence to the contrary. They "illustrate the social and profoundly radical character of the revolution from its formative years," as compañero Hart writes. They offer "proof that we were marching toward a confrontation with imperialism, and that the idea of social revolution had taken root among the combatants of the July 26 Movement." The hazy but unmistakable outlines of a socialist revolution can already be seen even in the earliest declarations and dreams.

The narrative and documents in *Aldabonazo* offer striking proof of the leadership capacities of Fidel as he forged the unified striking power of a cadre that was increasingly homogeneous, transformed by their own experiences as they fought to lay the foundations for this profound social transformation. A cadre transformed by the very workers and peasants they recruited to the revolutionary war.

### What Washington can't forgive

In the final chapter of *Aldabonazo*, compañero Hart tells a story about Col. Ramón Barquín, one of the officers of Batista's army incarcerated on the Isle of Pines for leading a military conspiracy against the dictatorship.

When those incarcerated at the prison learned of the successful invasion of Las Villas province in central Cuba by two Rebel Army columns under the command of Camilo [Cienfuegos] and Che [Guevara], Barquín insisted: "That's not possible. It's not militarily feasible."

To which a compañero replied, "Colonel, they did it because they didn't know it was impossible."

That is the example for which Washington has never forgiven the people of Cuba. And why it can never do so.

It remains the U.S. rulers' certain knowledge that they will face the resistance of *millions* of Cubans—who continue "not knowing it's impossible"—that has always made them fear invading Cuba.

Those fears capture the unflinching dignity and revolutionary fiber of Gerardo, Ramón, René, Fernando, and Antonio,<sup>1</sup> of the example they set for young militants in North America to emulate. And those *acts* convey the political confidence and courage the Cuban Revolution continues to give

those on the front lines of revolutionary struggles everywhere.

These are our reasons for the new editions of *Aldabonazo*, and for our gratitude that this has been possible.

<sup>1</sup> René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González are five Cuban revolutionists resident in the United States who in 1998 were framed up by the federal government on charges of conspiring to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign power, to commit espionage for Havana, and, in the case of Hernández, to commit murder. In December 1999 they were given sentences ranging from fifteen years to a double-life term and are currently in prison.

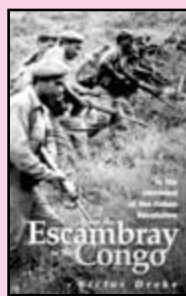
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# Leadership crisis sapped '30s labor revolt

Printed below is an excerpt from the afterword by Farrell Dobbs to *Teamster Bureaucracy*, one of Pathfinder's February Books of the Month. The book is the last in Dobbs's four-volume series chronicling the 1930s strikes, organizing drives, and political campaigns that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement. The author, who went on to become national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was a central actor in these events, serving as secretary-treasurer of Teamster Local 544 in Minneapolis and as a general organizer for the union.

The first volume, *Teamster Rebellion*, describes the 1934 strikes that built the union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO. *Teamster Power* tells of the Teamsters' subsequent 11-state over-the-road organizing drive. *Teamster Politics*



Union officials headed by United Mine Workers of America president John L. Lewis (at head of table) at 1941 Industry-Labor conference, called by President Franklin Roosevelt to secure labor peace and war production for U.S. rulers in World War II.

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recounts the union's response to FBI frame-ups, fascist probes, and ruling-class preparations to enter World War II.

*Teamster Bureaucracy* tells how the Minneapolis Teamsters, led by revolutionary socialists—referred to here as Trotskyists—fought to preserve their union's gains against President Franklin Roosevelt's Justice Department and FBI, state and city police and politicians, and the pro-war and anti-communist bureaucracy of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder Press. Printed by permission.



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**BY FARRELL DOBBS**

With the Trotskyists thus constituting the dominant force in the radical movement locally, it was possible for us to play a decisive role in the broad ranks of labor. We mobilized the trucking workers of the city for action on the basis of our class-struggle line. Both the local AFL officialdom and the IBT bureaucracy were outflanked through development of the combat momentum needed for the union ranks to brush aside all internal obstacles standing in their way. The trucking employers were defeated in battle, and a strong Teamster organization was consolidated in Minneapolis. After that our class-struggle course was extended into the surrounding area by means of a campaign to unionize over-the-road drivers. On the electoral plane, when the Stalinists and right-wingers made a shambles of the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota we pushed for reorganization of independent mass political action, by steps that could lead to the development of a labor party based on and controlled by the trade unions.

Those accomplishments were made possible through the interplay of two basic factors. One of these was the skillful and considerate leadership of the workers by revolutionary socialists. The other was our championing of trade union democracy. Full membership participation was encouraged in the organization's internal affairs. Free-

dom to express all points of view was upheld, as was the workers' right to set policy by majority vote.

As successes in the fight against the employers were achieved through this combination of able leadership and internal union democracy, the workers acquired increasing awareness of their great strength in class unity. They also began to get a better notion of what was needed to defend their interests. But variations existed in their grasp of class relations under capitalism and of the bosses' inherent antagonism to organized labor. Perceptions of that basic issue ranged from only elementary trade union consciousness in most instances, across intermediate stages of class-struggle understanding reached by more limited numbers, to attainment of a revolutionary socialist outlook by a few. This unevenness in levels of development presented no serious obstacle to progress, however, so long as labor generally remained in a state of upsurge. Workers who had become more advanced could take advantage of the existing struggle momentum to activate their lagging comrades. Step by well-timed step, in accord with the pace of events, effective forces could thereby be mobilized for action in the trade union and political spheres....

Nationally, the relationship of forces on the left was unfavorable to the Trotskyists during the 1930s. We were a small propaganda group. Our activities had to center

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on assembling the initial cadres for the reconstruction of a revolutionary socialist party in the aftermath of the Stalinization of the Communist Party. The advantageous position of the Minneapolis comrades was, therefore, unique. Elsewhere in the country our movement did not have the required strength and opportunity to play a leading role in labor struggles to the extent that we found possible in the Teamsters....

The misleaders were able to prevent the labor upsurge from going beyond the unionization of the unorganized mass production workers into the CIO, although much more was possible at the height of its energies. They managed to tie the new industrial union movement to the Democratic Party, beginning with the 1936 national elections, thereby keeping the workers mired in capitalist politics. By mid-1937, class-collaborationist norms were reestablished to a large extent in setting trade union policy. Reliance on help from the Roosevelt administration was substituted for use of the union's full power and a staggering setback resulted for the CIO with the defeat of the Little Steel strike.

Because of those leadership defaults the combat momentum of the insurgent masses was crippled and eventually broken. Even though strikes continued to occur episodically, the tide of battle had turned. A change in mood came over the union ranks. Militants found it more and more difficult to draw reluctant elements into action. Cautious attitudes became more pronounced, and a more conservative climate developed. To an increasing extent the best fighters found themselves swimming against the stream, except during those interludes when new struggles flared up briefly....

Roosevelt took advantage of the opportunity provided by these developments to implement the imperialists' key objective at the time. He lined up the labor bureaucracy in support of preparations for war, and, as a necessary corollary, he launched a witch-hunt against militants who resisted his foreign policy. This was made all the easier for him by labor's previous failure to take the independent political road, which left the capitalists in unchallenged control of the government. He had a free hand to use a wide range of repressive devices, including assignment of the FBI to a primary role as political police.

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# Meetings in Havana promote ‘Aldabonazo’

Continued from page 7

university studies in Moscow in the mid-1980s.

## ‘Promote ideas of Cuban Revolution’

“After the crumbling of socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and the difficult beginnings of the Special Period, there was an intensified need to promote the ideas of the Cuban Revolution,” Carreras said. The Special Period is the term used here for the deep economic crisis precipitated in the early 1990s by the sudden cut-off of aid and trade on favorable terms that Cuba had enjoyed with the Soviet bloc countries, making it more dependent for both its imports and needed export earnings on brutal fluctuations of the world capitalist market.

Carreras explained that she and Hart first met Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder’s president, during the 2000 Havana book fair at the launching of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, which has a preface by Hart. That’s where the idea of a Pathfinder edition of *Aldabonazo* was first discussed, she said. Carreras described the close collaboration with Pathfinder to produce the new edition, which she said gave the text and documents the presentation and quality they deserved.

Hart’s narrative is supplemented by a wealth of letters, circulars, and other documents of the Cuban revolutionary movement, written in the heat of the struggle. The new edition includes 28 pages of historic photos as well as a glossary, chronology, and index.

Eliades Acosta said that, like Carreras, he belonged to a generation of Cubans who “matured a lot” as they went through the eye-opening experience of living and studying in the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Acosta said that unlike what he and others had encountered in the USSR, they found in Cuban revolutionary leaders such as Armando Hart an approach toward new generations that encouraged their creativity rather than stifling it. As minister of culture from 1976 to 1997, Hart “established a very special dialog with young artists, creators, and thinkers, and avoided the repetition in Cuba of errors that in other parts of the world have been very costly to the world socialist and progressive movement.”

Today, Acosta said, referring to Washington, “the empire is in a period of decline, and therefore extremely dangerous,” both in its wars abroad as well as its attacks “against the American people—against their civil liberties and rights.” As procapitalist forces around the world “try to convince Cubans that we embody prehistoric, Jurassic Park-type ideas that have been left behind,” the need to “convey what the Cuban Revolution has represented and does represent takes on special meaning today.”

The fact that Pathfinder has published

*Aldabonazo*, Acosta said, “is a good sign of the times” for those standing up to imperialism.

## ‘A book young Cubans should read’

FEU president Joan Cabo told the audience that “this is a book all young Cubans should read.” *Aldabonazo*, he said, can help give members of the FEU a better understanding of Cuba’s revolutionary history. He noted that this is particularly important at a time when efforts are under way in Cuba to expand access to education by creating university extensions in every municipality of the country.

Also speaking was Héctor Rodríguez Llompert, who wrote a brief account published in *Aldabonazo* describing actions by the July 26 Movement in Havana in support of the landing of the *Granma* expedition that launched the revolutionary war at the end of 1956. He said the book introduced readers to how a vanguard of working people and youth “were educated as revolutionaries and internationalists” through the popular struggle led by the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement on multiple fronts—in the Sierra Maestra mountains, the urban underground, the university, and even the Batista dictatorship’s prisons.

Waters explained that Pathfinder has published *Aldabonazo* because it is one of the “weapons that working people in the United States and elsewhere in the world need to arm ourselves politically for class battles we all see coming toward us in the 21st century, battles that will determine the future—even the survival—of humanity.” (See text of Waters’s presentation on page 6.)

The main presentation was made by Hart, who emphasized that Cubans need to reach “the American people and American society” with the ideas of the Cuban Revolution. He expressed deep appreciation for the work of Pathfinder in publishing *Aldabonazo* in both English and Spanish.

## How rebels became socialists

Hart explained how he and others of his generation became socialists as they got involved in the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship.

He recounted how Cuban president Fidel Castro had recently asked him when he had become a socialist and he had responded that he really didn’t know. He noted with humor that after reading the new edition of *Aldabonazo* he had a better idea of the answer. He said he was surprised to realize how early it was when he read a July 1956 letter he had sent Mexican president Adolfo Ruiz Cortines in response to the arrest in Mexico of Fidel Castro and 27 others involved in preparing an armed expedition to Cuba. The letter is included in the book, and a quote from it is highlighted in the photo signature.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Presentation of *Aldabonazo* by Armando Hart Feb. 21, 2004, sponsored by Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. On left is Gen. Moisés Sio Wong.**

Cuba, Hart wrote in the 1956 letter, “is on the verge of a revolution that will transform the social and political order and will lay the foundations of a socialist and revolutionary democracy. We represent the vanguard of that revolution.”

Referring to discussions with other members of the July 26 Movement, Hart said, “Someone told me one day, ‘In the 1950s you were anticommunist.’ I told him, ‘No, I was anti-Stalinist. Because what was presented as socialism at that time did not correspond to the reality of our revolution.’” He and others, Hart said, “became socialists in spite of the Soviet Union.”

There were others like him, he said, pointing to the example of the Saíz brothers, ages 17 and 18, who in 1958 wrote a manifesto titled “Why We Are Fighting” that presented a revolutionary perspective and was critical of the Soviet leadership.

While not members of the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party (PSP), which claimed the mantle of V.I. Lenin, he and many other members of the July 26 Movement “were enthusiastic about Lenin.” Then, as they read about the Bolshevik party in Russia, “I also discovered Trotsky,” Hart said, referring to Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

Hart outlined what he thought were the most important factors in the victory of the Cuban revolutionary struggle. These, he said, included the caliber of Fidel Castro as a revolutionary leader; the illegitimacy of the Batista regime; the moral high ground taken by the revolutionary forces; the fusion of the deep-going anti-imperialist traditions of the Cuban people with the struggle against the dictatorship; the weakness of the national bourgeoisie; and the popular insurrection that played a decisive role in bringing down the regime.

Hart concluded, “Fidel and the Cuban people gave our generation the opportunity to participate in one of the world’s great revolutions. If we benefited from the enormous influence of the revolutions of the 19th century and the anti-imperialist struggles of the 20th century, young people today also benefit from 50 years of revolution.” Those intertwined revolutionary traditions are a strength that the new generation can draw on. “Those are the lessons I would like to pass on to the next generations,” he said.

In the informal conversations following the event, where some 80 copies of the book were sold, some of the young people present said that many of Hart’s remarks, particularly about how he and others had become socialists, were new to them and that they appreciated hearing more about the real history of the ideas of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

It was out of that presentation that the Union of Young Communists and the Federation of University Students decided to organize the meeting several days later at the José Antonio Echeverría Polytechnic Institute.

About 100 people, mostly students and some professors, listened to the talks by Carreras, Waters, and Hart, who were introduced by a leader of the FEU, the organization that hosted the meeting. Among them were about half of the 15 or so Venezuelan

students currently taking classes there.

Hart, enjoying the opportunity to have an exchange with students, elaborated on some of the same themes and fielded a number of questions. One student asked what “aldabonazo” referred to. Hart explained that the word, which in Spanish means a warning knock on the door, became a rallying cry of students and other rebels who went into the streets of Cuba to resist the March 1952 military coup by Batista.

Another youth said he had had an opportunity to talk with volunteers at the Pathfinder booth at the Havana book fair and noted the contribution made by Pathfinder in producing *Aldabonazo*. He said he favored deepening exchanges of political views and experiences between young people in Cuba and the United States, as well as holding more discussions on campus like this one.

Hart replied saying that he hoped to meet with FEU leaders to discuss organizing a seminar series on the campus.

A professor asked Hart about other books he had written, including one titled *Marx and Martí* and another on the roots of socialist ideas in Cuba. Hart promised he would send these books to students and professors at the campus to encourage further discussion.

Another student explained that “although the curriculum here is based on scientific and technical studies, we are also studying the ideas of José Martí.” Hart said he thought the expansion of the curriculum to include the study of the broadest questions, not just technical training, was essential. “We must include the study of Gramsci, Mella, and Marx too,” he said, referring to Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci and Cuban communist Julio Antonio Mella.

At the end students lined up at a literature table and snapped up some 50 copies of *Aldabonazo*. Several also purchased a range of other Pathfinder titles, from *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* to *Capitalism’s World Disorder* by Jack Barnes.

On February 21 a third presentation of *Aldabonazo* was held, sponsored by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution at their national center in Havana. Carreras, Waters, and Hart spoke to some 125 people. Most were combatants from several generations of revolutionary struggles, from the Rebel Army in the 1950s to internationalist volunteers who had fought in Angola in the 1970s or ‘80s alongside Angolan troops to defeat an invasion by the South African apartheid regime’s army.

Also on the platform were several leaders of the Combatants Association—Gens. Gustavo Chui Beltrán, Sergio Pérez Lezcano, and Rolando Kindelán. Among the guests of honor were relatives of the five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons. Hart presented them copies of *Aldabonazo* dedicated to each of the five.

All three book presentations received media coverage. The February 15 event was covered by Cuban TV, Radio Rebelde, Radio Reloj, the news agencies Prensa Latina and AIN, *Granma Internacional*, and the magazine *Bohemia*.

Alex Alvarado contributed to this article.

## Further Reading From Pathfinder

### Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956–58

by Ernesto Che Guevara

A firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. With clarity and humor, Guevara describes his own political education. He explains how the struggle transformed the men and women of the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro. And how these combatants forged a political leadership capable of guiding millions of workers and peasants to open the socialist revolution in the Americas. Guevara’s *Episodes* appears here for the first time in English. \$23.95



### Che Guevara Talks to Young People



Ernesto Che Guevara, the legendary Argentine-born revolutionary, speaks as an equal with youth of Cuba and the world. Contains eight speeches from 1960 to 1964. Also available in Spanish \$14.95

### Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War 1956–58

Brigadier General Teté Puebla, the highest ranking woman in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, joined the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship when she was 15 years old. This is her story from clandestine activity in the cities, to serving as an officer in the Rebel Army’s first all-women’s platoon. Also in Spanish. \$14.00



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# U.S. troops out of Haiti

No Canadian, French, or U.S. troops to Haiti! Working people should oppose imperialist intervention in the Caribbean nation. The supposed concern of the White House for Haitian blood now being shed, and for “democracy,” amounts to nothing but crocodile tears.

We need to remember that the very same imperialist powers intervening in Haiti once again have a long record of open support for one of the most brutal dictatorships in the history of humanity—the Duvalier regime. Under that tyranny, the infamous Tonton Macoutes death squads spread terror among the Haitian toilers, with the blessing of Washington and Paris. Many of the same brutal thugs associated with that reign of terror, and with the subsequent military regime that ousted the first Aristide government in a 1991 coup, are now leading another military coup against a “democratically elected president.”

There is no indication that Washington engineered the current military uprising. The forces the U.S. imperialists helped set in motion to unseat the Aristide administration have taken their own course, throwing the country into chaos and instability. Even though the U.S. rulers are now giving tacit support to the rebels, they are worried about being openly identified with a return to power of forces associated with the Tonton Macoutes, at a time when they are pushing to extend imperialist domination around the world in the name of “democracy.” The imposition of certain bourgeois democratic forms is not just the rationalization for the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq. Washington has also expanded its military intervention in Colombia and is planning to use those bases as a beachhead for a possible assault on Venezuela on the pretext that the government of President Hugo Chávez there is “undemocratic.” So the U.S. rulers are trying to give the appearance of a “neutral” mediator between the Haitian government and the coup plotters. At the same time, Washington does not particularly care to keep the Aristide government in power and will do nothing to stop the rightist insurgents from taking over the capital if they amass the forces to do so.

The Aristide administration, a bourgeois nationalist regime that has relied time and again on imperialist benevolence and goon-like police violence against opponents, has helped lead working people once again to the wall. A victory by the rightist insurgents would be a big defeat for Haitian toilers. But working people in Haiti, or any other country for that matter, can’t look for a solution to the imperialist masters who bankrolled and propped up their henchmen over decades in the past. Only through the independent organization of working people into a proletarian party that can lead workers and peasants to carry out a successful social revolution will the toiling masses of Haiti rid themselves once and for all of the Tonton Macoutes—and all their modern incarnations dressed up as liberators or democrats or even socialists—along with the domination by their imperialist masters. In doing this they would be emulating the course taken by the workers and farmers of neighboring Cuba, who ousted the U.S.-backed Batista tyranny 45 years ago, ended imperialist domination, and opened the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas.

In the United States, Canada, France, and other citadels of finance capital, working people need to focus our fire on the ruling class in each of these countries and demand: Imperialist troops out of Haiti! End the country’s debt slavery—cancel Haiti’s foreign debt now!

## New York court clears cop

**Continued from front page**

birthday party, came up the building’s stairs to cross the roof to another apartment. As Stansbury stepped through the door to the roof, Neri, whose gun was drawn, immediately fired and killed him.

Press reports sought to put a human face on the cop who killed the unarmed youth, making special mention of Neri’s tear-filled testimony to the grand jury. Pointing to his “clean” 12-year record, the press glowingly described him as a “family man.”

“Those tears weren’t real,” said Timothy Stansbury, Sr., the slain youth’s father, to a gathering outside the city police headquarters three days after the jury’s verdict. “A month ago I had a son, and now he is gone because of this man.”

“I don’t want him to face anything but jail,” Irene Clayburne, Stansbury Jr.’s grandmother, told *New York Newsday*. “He had no right getting off like this.”

Referring to the city administration, she added, “They just wanted to have this whole thing fixed so that this officer could get off.”

The administration of former mayor Rudolph Giuliani faced a crisis as the popular response to brutal police killings—alongside the city government’s efforts to criminalize victims of police brutality and whitewash the cops—drew thousands into the streets in a series of protests. These actions culminated in sustained mass demonstrations demanding justice in the killing of West African immigrant Amadou Diallo in February 1999, who was slain in a hail of 41 police bullets.

To head off similar popular mobilizations, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg adopted a different tactic in response to Stansbury’s killing. Within a day of the fatal shooting, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said the shooting was “unjustified,” drawing praise from prominent opponents of police brutality in the city. The mayor followed suit, turning up for the young man’s funeral and addressing the crowd.

Following the grand jury’s decision, the mayor told the press that Neri “had his day in court” and “we have a system of laws, and they’ve made their ruling.”

With these actions, city authorities succeeded in first deflating any outburst of street protests by giving the appearance of siding with the victim of cop racism and brutality. Then, by putting the blame for letting the killer cop go scot-free on a faceless grand jury, they deflected responsibility and built on their initial success of dampening the prospect of a popular explosion. No major protests have taken place since the cop was absolved of wrongdoing.

The only such action was a February 20 picket line by some 40 people at police headquarters in Manhattan organized by the December 12th Movement, a Black nationalist group based in Harlem. Timothy Stansbury, Sr. spoke briefly at this rally.

In an editorial in the February 19 *Newsday* titled, “Grand Jury Decision Reasonable in Shooting Case,” the daily labeled the killing a “lapse.” It added, “The grand jury only said that the shooting failed to rise to the level of a crime. It did not declare the shooting justified.”

Kelly has continued to defend the cops’ practice of poking around working-class communities and apartment buildings with loaded guns drawn. “You can’t micro-manage or direct every situation,” he said in a January 24 radio interview. “It is a personal judgment that has to be made in many, many cases.”

“They come through here and they take these boys and they slam them against the wall,” said Stansbury’s grandmother, referring to the “standard police procedures” followed by the cops in the predominately Black neighborhood. She said she would protest the jury decision “if I have to walk [in demonstrations] by myself.”

U.S. Attorney Roslynn Mauskopf said her office had begun “a thorough review of the evidence” to determine whether Neri will face federal charges for violating Timothy Stansbury, Jr.’s civil rights.

## How abortion was decriminalized

In a letter to the editor printed on the facing page, Susan Lamont makes an important correction to a statement in the February 9 *Militant* editorial, “Build March for Women’s Lives.” In response, we reprint below excerpts from the article Lamont refers to, assessing how working people won the victory registered in the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* U.S. Supreme Court ruling, which decriminalized abortion. The entire article—first published in July 1973, and titled “The Abortion Struggle: What Have We Accomplished; Where Should We Go from Here?”—can be found in Part III of the three-part Education for Socialists bulletin *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation*, published by Pathfinder Press.

—Editor



**BY BETSEY STONE  
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS**

The January 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion was a landmark victory in the struggle for women’s liberation. It was the first major advance recorded by the new wave of struggles by women in the fight against the institutionalized domestic slavery to which women have been relegated by class society.

The abortion rights victory opened the door for millions of women—especially working women, Blacks, Chicanas, Puerto Ricans—to begin to control their own reproductive functions,

## REPLY TO A READER

their own bodies. It went a significant way towards establishing a fundamental human right for all women—the right to choose whether or not to bear a child.

Freedom from enforced motherhood is a precondition to women’s liberation. Only with the right to control their own bodies can women begin to reassert their full human identity as productive, not only reproductive, beings....

The victory can only serve to hasten the development of a proletarian vanguard of fighting women and men capable of achieving women’s liberation and leading the American socialist revolution to victory.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) made a contribution in helping to win the abortion rights victory....

### Behind the Supreme Court victory

The Supreme Court decision was brought about by a combination of factors....

First, the decision was a product of the increasing disparity between the actual position of women and the possibilities provided by today’s technology and wealth for freeing women from a narrow existence of domestic drudgery....

The impact of women’s liberation ideas and the fight carried out by large numbers of women was another major factor behind the Supreme Court decision. This was manifested in the fact that the concept put forward by large numbers of women’s liberation forces—that abortion should be a woman’s right to choose—was incorporated in the Supreme Court decision.

The ruling class was also influenced by the general radicalization with its challenges to traditional attitudes and values. The rise of the Black movement, the antiwar movement, and other struggles for social change helped create an atmosphere that spurred changing views on abortion....

The rise of the women’s liberation movement helped bring about the first partial victory in the abortion rights struggle: the legalization of abortion in New York state in 1970. The excellent safety record in New York under the new law and the demonstrated demand for legal abortion helped legitimize the procedure and also made it more difficult for the ruling class to take back this limited gain women had won.

The liberalization of abortion in New York sparked a concerted drive by the anti-abortion forces which began to assume national scope. The polarization and ferment that began to mount over this question forced the ruling class to realize they would have to settle the matter one way or another.

### Orientation confirmed

The victory for women embodied in the Supreme Court decision confirms the orientation of the SWP of throwing its energies into the fight for the right to abortion....

Although the Supreme Court decision was handed down before either the feminist movement or the abortion rights movement had reached a stage of mobilizing large numbers of women, the work carried out as builders of the Women’s National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) has an important impact. Over the past several years, WONAAC has been the one women’s liberation organization that has carried out consistent activity oriented toward involving women in struggle, independent of the capitalist parties and politicians, around an issue of vital concern to masses of women. It had the correct political position on abortion as a woman’s right. It was the only women’s liberation group to continue to fight uncompromisingly for the right to abortion throughout the 1972 election period. It was the only one to answer the so-called “right-to-life” campaign in an organized manner and on a correct political basis. And it was the group that did the most to publicize, encourage, and link up with the growing international struggle for the right to abortion....

Together with other forces, the SWP and YSA helped initiate the Women’s National Abortion Action Coalition in July 1971.

The initial organizing efforts, including the first national WONAAC conference, were successful in involving and inspiring hundreds of women with the perspective of united action to beat back the anti-abortion forces and participation in a struggle which could register an important victory for women. At the same time, from its very inception, a debate raged within and around WONAAC between the supporters of a mass-action approach and the sectarians and liberals who saw WONAAC as a threat to their orientation....

### Balance sheet of the abortion campaign

In supporting the idea of building a national abortion law repeal campaign, the SWP envisioned the potential for a movement of significant proportions around this question. In drawing the balance sheet of this campaign, we must examine WONAAC’s accomplishments, as well as discuss why no massive mobilizations on the abortion question developed.

The most dramatic proof of WONAAC’s correctness was the Supreme Court decision itself. The ruling reflected the social impact of the burgeoning women’s liberation movement as a whole. It was also affected by WONAAC’s arguments and activities. The political concept that WONAAC fought for as the axis of the abortion struggle was incorporated into the decision itself with the recognition of abortion as a woman’s right.

WONAAC’s direct achievements are impressive. It carried out the November 20, 1971 Washington demonstration, the first national action for the right to abortion. It carried out manifold activities in local areas in May 1972. The New York WONAAC demonstration held during that Abortion Action Week was the only visible protest action by the abortion rights movement to offset the nearly successful attempts by the anti-abortion forces to have the New York abortion law repealed....

WONAAC became a subject for discussion and debate within existing women’s liberation groups including NOW [National Organization for Women], the citywide women’s liberation groups and the campus groups. Although the vicious red-baiting limited WONAAC’s ability to involve in action members of NOW and the citywide groups, an important layer was won over, and many campus groups wholeheartedly joined the WONAAC campaign.

WONAAC, however, was never able to involve in its activities significant numbers of women in addition to the activists of the women’s liberation movement. It did not become a mass movement before the Supreme Court handed down its favorable decision. The size of

**Continued on Page 11**



# Brutal rightist forces take over half of Haiti

Continued from front page

no indication that the military coup was engineered by the U.S. government, the rebels have the tacit support of Washington, Paris, and Ottawa.

In an effort to slow the crumbling of his regime, Aristide has accepted a “peace plan” crafted by Washington, Paris, and Ottawa, and backed by the Organization of American States (OAS). It includes the deployment of imperialist troops to Haiti under the guise of “peacekeeping” in exchange for a promise to let Aristide complete his term in office, which ends in two years. Under the accord, the Pentagon dispatched 50 Marines to the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince February 23.

“I accept the plan, publicly and entirely,” said Aristide, according to the BBC. “In one word, yes.”

The combination of reliance on imperialist benevolence and increased use of thug attacks on opponents by Aristide’s administration has continued to alienate working people—who, until recently, had opposed in their majority imperialist-backed attempts to oust the bourgeois nationalist regime.

When 500 students marched February 20 in Port-au-Prince demanding Aristide’s resignation, for example, pro-government gangs armed with guns and machetes attacked the protesters, injuring 20, according to the BBC.

More than 60 people have been killed, most of them police officers, since fighting began with the February 5 takeover of the city of Gonaïves by the armed opposition forces.

The last week of February, pro-government police began fleeing as relatively small groups of armed rebels entered town after town.

“Police put up little resistance as about 200 gunmen took over Cap-Haitien after a few hours of sporadic gunfire,” said an article in February 23 *Los Angeles Times*. “Although an assault on the capital seemed unlikely given the rebels’ scattered locations and limited numbers, Cap-Haitien also had been well braced to repel an onslaught until a few days ago, when frightened police barricaded themselves in their stations.”

Guy Phillippe, a leader of the armed opposition groups in Cap-Haitien, claimed his forces would be able to rapidly take the capital because, he claimed, “No one wants to die for Aristide.”

Phillippe has served as the police chief of Cap-Haitien and was security chief in the government of René Preval, who replaced Aristide as president in 1996. He faced accusations of organizing attempted coups against the Preval government.

The governments of the United States, France, and Canada are already well on their way to launching a military intervention aimed at deepening the imperialist domination of Haiti and the superexploitation of workers and farmers there.

Under the guise of concern over the rising death toll in the country, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell stated, “What we want to do right now is find a political solution, and then there are willing nations that would come forward with a police presence to implement the political agreement that the sides come to.”

Paris, Haiti’s former colonial power, is also actively putting itself forward as a candidate for such an operation. Some 4,000

French troops are now stationed on the nearby Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. After speaking with his counterparts in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Germany and Brazil, French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said, “We are working with all these countries to consider the feasibility of a peacekeeping force that would deploy if the conditions allowed because of an end to the fighting.”

The Canadian government said it would be willing to send 100 French-speaking cops if a deal is struck.

A delegation including Cesar Gaviria, secretary-general of the OAS, and French, Canadian, and Caricom officials visited Haiti February 21. U.S. undersecretary of state for Latin American affairs Roger Noriega—infamous for his recent statements announcing Washington’s expanded offensive against Cuba and Venezuela—is Washington’s point man in Haiti now.

The delegation’s proposal includes disarming armed groups linked to Aristide’s political party, Fanmi Lavalas, and ceding control of the police to a newly appointed prime minister and cabinet. According to Agence France Presse, the plan “calls for the creation of a three-person panel—comprising one Aristide representative, one member of the opposition and an international official—that will be charged with selecting a larger nine-to-15-member council that will then name a prime minister and a new government.”

Colin Powell stated February 19 that while the White House was not planning to force Aristide to resign, it would not object if he agreed to leave ahead of schedule. “He is the president for some time to come yet,” Powell said. “If an agreement is reached that moves that in another direction, that’s fine.”

Aristide was elected president in 1990 following a revolutionary uprising that overturned the regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Washington, Paris, and other imperialist powers had backed the brutal reign of the Duvaliers for nearly 30 years. Aristide was overthrown himself by a military coup in 1991. He was returned to power on the bayonets of a U.S.-led force that invaded Haiti three years later.

After stepping down in 1996, Aristide ran again in the 2000 elections and won the presidency. His opponents charged electoral fraud and have waged a campaign demanding his resignation and new elections ever since. After having backed brutal dictatorships for decades, Washington and its allies used the club of “democracy,” hypocritically charging that Aristide was indeed guilty of electoral fraud.

During his latest term in power, Aristide has implemented economic measures demanded by Washington, including lowering of tariffs, floating the gourde (Haiti’s national currency), and privatization of some state-owned companies. These measures—along with steps by Washington that cut off loans and directed other governments to follow suit—exacerbated Haiti’s deep economic crisis. Malnourishment is widespread and most people earn less than \$1 a day. Unemployment is nearly 70 percent and has not



improved under Aristide’s administration.

Despite this record, Washington and its imperialist allies have never trusted Aristide’s regime. His earlier widespread popular support reflected the self-confidence and combativity of the Haitian toilers coming out of the successful struggle to oust Duvalier. His administration also took some measures that Washington vehemently opposed, like reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba and welcoming more than 500 Cuban doctors and other medical personnel offering health care at the most remote and poorest areas of the country.

In a February 12 statement at the third special meeting of the council of ministers of the Association of Caribbean States in Panama City, Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque said, “Cuba believes that the international community cannot leave Haiti alone. The social situation is worsening. The old problems derived from colonialism and exploitation are compounded by new, pressing difficulties relating to the unjust and excluding international economic order.” Pérez Roque said Cuban doctors, literacy teachers, and other volunteers in Haiti have been instructed to stay in their posts and continue their policy of non-interference in Haiti’s internal affairs.

The deepening economic crisis along with Aristide’s use of thugs to attempt to silence opposition have both bolstered opposition groups such as the U.S.-backed Democratic Convergence and alienated working people from politics.

Armed insurgents who continue to hold Gonaïves, a city of around 60,000 people, have taken several other towns across the

central department of Artibonite and to the north, all the way to the border with the Dominican Republic to the east.

The groups in Gonaïves include members of the Cannibal Army, a formerly pro-Aristide gang, and forces tied to previous military dictatorships in Haiti.

About 50 gunmen took the town of Hinche on February 16. The police chief was shot and killed along with his bodyguard as they fled after a brief gun battle. Nearby Maïssade was taken the next day by a force commanded by Louis-Jodel Chamblain, a former leader of the paramilitary death squad called the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), which victimized working people during the three years of the 1991-1994 dictatorship.

Some pro-imperialist forces are reported to have crossed into the country from the Dominican Republic and appear to be former soldiers in the Haitian army, which was dissolved in 1995. They claim to be “the new Haitian army.”

Reporters with the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* say that in the town of Maïssade thousands of residents welcomed the destruction of the police headquarters and the occupation, dancing, singing, and chanting against Aristide. But in Hinche, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, leader of the anti-Aristide Papaye Peasants Movement, cancelled a scheduled peasants rally so it would not be seen as supporting the armed insurgents. A rebel commander told the *Sun-Sentinel* that he was disappointed that Hinche residents didn’t greet him as enthusiastically as those in Maïssade.

Tens of thousands of Haitians who live here in South Florida are following developments in their native country.

“We don’t want the French to send in troops,” one Haitian worker at Point Blank Body Armor in Oakland Park, Florida, said.

Reflecting the misleadership Aristide has provided by his repeated reliance on U.S. troops to save his skin, this worker added, in a view shared by a number of working people here. “They were the slave owners before we won independence. But U.S. troops would be good. Otherwise the FRAPH forces might take over.”

Other Haitian workers, however, are at least skeptical that U.S. intervention can be in their interests. “In 1916 when U.S. troops invaded our country for the first time, Haiti was a rich country,” another worker at Point Blank said. “When they left they took all our riches and left us a poor country.”

## — LETTERS —

### Abortion protests

It was good to see the editorial “Build March for Women’s Lives” in the February 9 *Militant*. The door is wide open for young women, workers, farmers, and other supporters of abortion rights to get involved in the committees and coalitions building the April 25 March for Women’s Lives in Washington, D.C.

However, the fourth paragraph of the editorial, which describes how *Roe v. Wade* was won, says: “Like the defeat of Jim Crow segregation against Blacks—a victory won through a mass movement of working people—the *Roe v. Wade* decision was secured through massive protests of men and women in the streets.” I think readers of the *Militant*, especially young people like my co-workers, many of whom were born long after 1973, would get the impression that the *Roe v. Wade* decision was a result of a movement analogous to or comparable to the civil rights movement. This isn’t accurate.

I would encourage *Militant* readers to review the article, “The Abortion Struggle: What Have We Accomplished, Where Should We Go from Here?” by Betsey Stone and Mary-Alice Waters in Part III of the Education for Socialists series on *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation*, available from [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com).

Stone and Waters explain the main factors which led to the Supreme Court decision: the changing position of women in society and the disparity between their

actual position and the possibilities opened by new technology and wealth; the impact of the Black struggle and other struggles for social change, including the rise of the women’s liberation movement itself, of which the abortion rights struggle was a part; and other factors.

They explain that the “Supreme Court decision was handed down before either the feminist movement or the abortion rights movement had reached a stage of mobilizing large numbers of women.” In the section, “Balance Sheet of the Abortion Campaign,” they explain why “no massive mobilizations on the abortion question developed.”

There was a real campaign to legalize abortion, which included some street demonstrations, lawsuits, teach-in-type events, and other activities. But these never developed into a mass movement anywhere near the scale or depth of the civil rights movement, although the Black struggle certainly had a profound impact on and deeply conditioned the emerging women’s liberation movement.

Susan LaMont  
Birmingham, Alabama

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Lessons of abortion rights struggles

Continued from Page 10

WONAAC’s actions were smaller than we had anticipated they would become. The reason is that we underestimated the combined impact of various obstacles to the pace of WONAAC’s development. These obstacles included:

1) The intense opposition to the national abortion campaign within sections of the women’s liberation movement, expressed, among other ways, in the virulent red-baiting of WONAAC. The initial strength of the ultralefts and liberals was greater than we had foreseen....

2) We underestimated the strength and effectiveness of the reactionary anti-abortion forces. The struggle for the right to abortion was a new battle, and it was up against deep-seated and widespread prejudices. The well-financed and energetic anti-abortion campaign succeeded in confusing many people over the issue....

3) The abortion campaign was launched at the beginning of the 1972 election period, which extended over the first year and half of WONAAC’s existence. WONAAC was constantly under the pressure of the strong liberal forces who wanted to subordinate the abortion fight to lesser-evil support for capitalist party candidates.

4) The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam and then Nixon’s deal with Moscow and Peking against the Vietnamese, along with other factors...led to a general downturn in the antiwar movement, and radical activities on the campuses. Just as the upsurge of the general radicalization in 1968-70 had its effect in spurring on the struggle of women, the downturn affected the movement too. In retrospect we can now see that the women’s liberation movement was born at the very height of the radical upsurge of the last decade. In its struggles it was swimming upstream from the start.



# Swedish rulers debate military policy

## Prepare armed forces for more active use abroad, discuss NATO membership

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—The U.S.-led military victory in the war against Iraq, along with the subsequent reinforcement of Washington's dominant position over its imperialist rivals, has accelerated a debate in the ruling class and among politicians here on the future military and "national security" policies of Swedish imperialism.

Like the more powerful French and German governments, Stockholm opposed the Anglo-American assault on Iraq, calling for the continuation of the United Nations weapons "inspections" headed by former Swedish foreign minister Hans Blix. The withdrawal of the inspectors on the eve of the Anglo-American invasion meant that the Swedish rulers were effectively sidelined. The war also ended trade relations with Saddam Hussein's regime, including those built up by Swedish companies before the UN sanctions were imposed at the start of the 1990s.

The Swedish government is thus not included in Washington's "coalition of the willing"—those governments who joined the invading forces or have reinforced the Anglo-American occupation. Swedish companies are prohibited from bidding for major "reconstruction" contracts in Iraq.

### Transformation of the armed forces

Well before these events, spokespeople for the billionaire ruling families had launched a discussion on the transformation of the Swedish armed forces.

In December 1996 the parliament voted to move away from a military that had been organized to stave off an invasion from the east—that is, from the Soviet Union. The parliament is scheduled to vote on further steps along these lines at the end of this year. Discussions leading to that point have shown a broad consensus that the armed forces should be better prepared to take part in rapid military deployments around the globe.

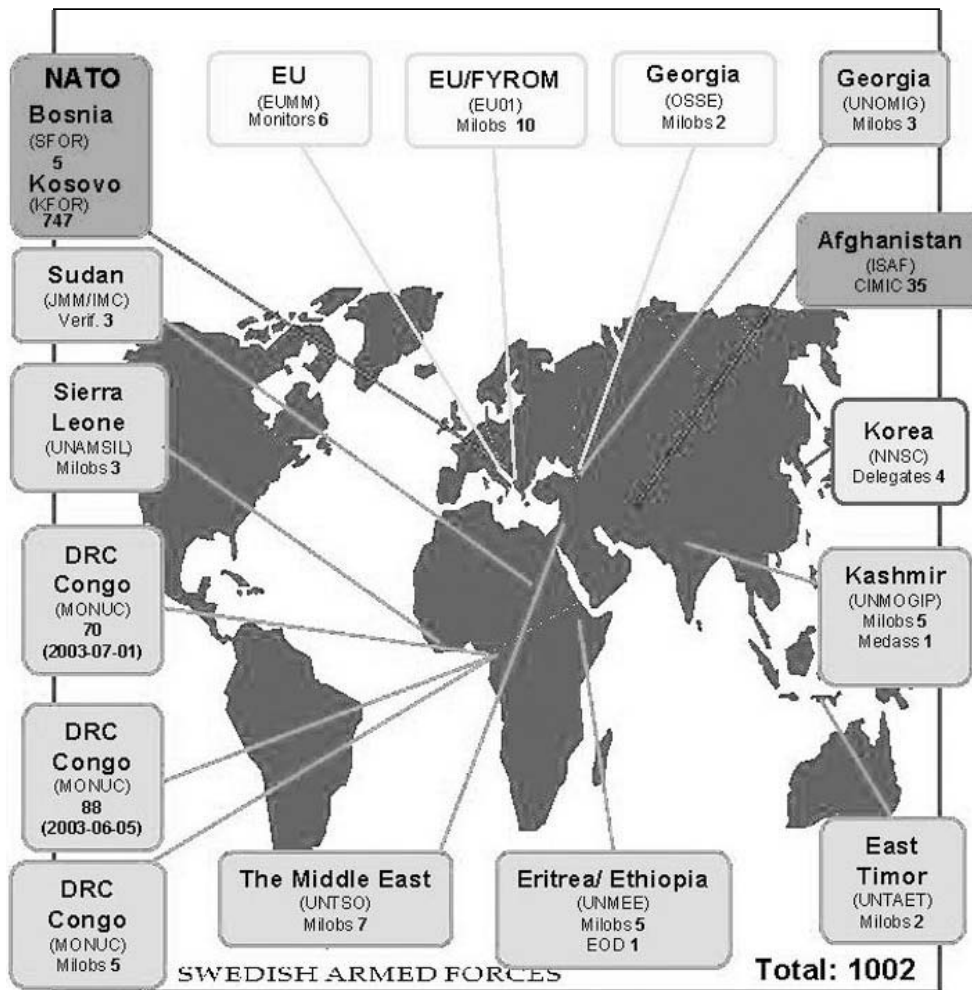
Other questions have sparked more debate, however—including on how to carry out such a military policy with sharply limited resources, the kinds of alliances of benefit to the rulers of this small imperialist country, and the role of the armed forces within Sweden itself.

Although armed forces personnel have been cut by 70 percent in the last decade, the military budget is almost the same as in 1990.

In November the military commander in chief, Johan Hederstedt, was forced to resign after only three years in that position, following a campaign against him in the *Svenska Dagbladet* newspaper, which alleged the misuse of public funds, aiming its fire on abuse of the limousine service assigned to the military. More fundamental issues were likely involved, however. The chairman of the defense commission in parliament, Eskil Erlandsson of the Center Party, criticized Hederstedt for failing to carry through agreed-on changes to the armed forces.

In a February 17 article in the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter*, former chief of intelligence and Hederstedt's replacement as commander in chief, Håkan Syrén, declared that the most pressing task before the armed forces was to "increase its ability to contribute to international crises handling."

One of Syrén's proposals is to change the present enlistment at military headquarters to military training at the school level. Presently all young men are called up for enlistment, but fewer than 30 percent undergo training. At the annual "People and Defense" conference in January, Syrén said that all young men and women should go through a week of initial training at their high school. The ones most motivated, judged by their willingness to sign up for duty abroad,



Swedish troops abroad as of August, 2003. Discussion within bourgeoisie shows growing consensus that more such interventions are on the agenda.

would then be offered a regular military training program.

### NATO or 'Europe'

A debate among the different political parties is also under way on Stockholm's stance toward NATO. The Swedish government remains outside the U.S.-dominated military alliance.

The liberal People's Party is one bourgeois formation that wants to reverse this. "A purely EU defense for Europe is not in the interests of Scandinavia, Finland and the Baltic countries. Sweden thus... should work against such a development and maintain that NATO is the spine in the defense system of Europe. The most efficient way to do that is for Sweden to be a member of NATO," said People's Party Member of Parliament (MP) Carl Hamilton recently.

Leaders of the Moderate Party, including party chairman Fredrik Reinfeldt and MP Gunnar Hökmark, have also declared their support for NATO membership. By contrast, former party chairman and prime minister Carl Bildt wants increased Swedish collaboration within the European Union—the Berlin- and Paris-dominated European trade and currency bloc. Sweden, wrote Bildt in *Dagens Nyheter*, should take part "fully and wholly, without reservations and objections."

Writing just before the mid-December conference in Brussels that was supposed to adopt a new EU constitution, Bildt predicted that "this weekend [Europe] will become a sharper force for peace and an actor in security politics." Unfortunately for his argument, the conference collapsed in acrimonious division. The meeting did discuss a proposed EU military structure, part of an effort on the part of Berlin and Paris to establish a military pole independent of the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.

Prime Minister Göran Persson of the ruling Social Democratic party has so far straddled the fence between these imperialist military alliances. In a January 30 debate in parliament, he appeared to support the status quo in defending "freedom of alliance"—another name for Swedish so-called neutrality and non-membership of NATO. At the same time he called for both far-reaching collaboration with other

EU countries and "a strong transatlantic link" with Washington.

The Swedish armed forces are presently participating in several UN missions or interventions by the Organization for Safety and Security in Europe, some of them led by NATO. Sweden has more than 500 soldiers in Kosova as part of the NATO occupation forces. Some 35 are in Afghanistan as well. That number will increase to 100 with more troops slated to join the NATO intervention there this spring. Together with Finland, this new group will constitute a Provisional Regional Team, being sent out into the countryside where, according to *Svenska Dagbladet*, "security needs to be improved."

The government will also send 230 soldiers from its recently established international deployment battalion on "peace enforcement" to Liberia in February.

While being vague on future military alliances, the Swedish prime minister is more outspoken on dealing with so-called terrorist threats and "criminals." In the biannual debate among party leaders in parliament on January 21, Persson proposed that 3 billion Swedish krona—the amount that would allegedly be saved from the military budget under one option now under consideration—be used to "fight internal threats like criminality and terrorism" (1 krona = US\$0.14).

Persson has a different emphasis from Syrén and other military representatives, who argue that the armed forces should have a larger role in combating domestic "terrorist threats." By contrast, the prime minister pointedly calls for more spending on cops, courts, and prisons.

In an interview with *Svenska Dagbladet* that same day, Syrén complained about the lack of laws and guidelines for cooperation between the police and military against "terrorist" threats, despite proposals for closer collaboration from a commission established after the Sept. 11, 2001, events in the United States. He noted that police had asked air force officers to patrol the air space during the memorial meeting for former foreign minister Anna Lindh in September last year. The air force had turned away two airplanes and one helicopter, Syrén said. But, if the aircraft had refused to follow

their command, he protested, the air force pilots had no authorization to open fire.

### Afghanistan: 'first feminist war'

Leaders of the Liberal Youth League, the youth organization of the People's Party, have presented one of the clearest proposals so far for the military transformation under discussion. In an article in the January 21 *Göteborgsposten*, league chairperson Fredrik Malm and vice chair Nina Larsson, a lieutenant presently on duty in Kosova, put forward the slogan: "Dismantle the freedom of alliance and introduce a professional army."

Malm and Larsson advocated membership in NATO and argued against a separate European defense headquarters. They defended the 2001 U.S.-led war against Afghanistan as the "first feminist war" and asserted that the Swedish armed forces have a progressive role to play in promoting equality around the world.

Ali Esbati, chairperson of the Young Left, the youth organization of the Left Party, which was formerly the Communist Party, embraced the same nationalist framework in taking issue with these proposals a week later. Their line, he argued in the same newspaper, would result in a narrow, elitist army that under U.S. leadership would take part in the global oppression of the people in the third world. He also spoke for a change, however: he is for the draft to be extended to women. "In a democracy both men and women should have the same rights and the same duties. Anything else is not acceptable," he wrote.

### 'Not a single öre...'

"Both these views are in deep contrast to the position of the Communist League, which is in the traditions of the Marxist movement," said Catharina Tirsén, speaking for the Communist League at a Militant Labor Forum on January 23. The forum addressed the end of the oft-touted "Swedish model" of a relatively wide-ranging social wage and official neutrality in foreign policy.

"We are against one single man or woman, one single öre (cent) going to the military," said Tirsén. Such a stance, she said, was "completely in the spirit of the Swedish working class in 1905, who extended their solidarity and support to their class brothers and sisters in Norway as they fought for independence from Stockholm. The Swedish bourgeoisie had to give up on their plans of going to war against Norway to maintain their dominance in face of that working-class opposition."

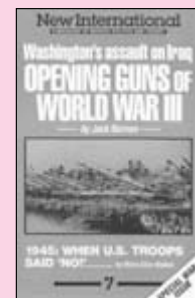
Working people in Sweden have nothing in common with the military ambitions of the Swedish bourgeoisie, Tirsén emphasized. Instead, she added, the working class needs its own military and foreign policy.

### Further reading from Pathfinder

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